

Thursday, April 27, 2017

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THE SPICE IS RIGHT FOR FAMILY-RUN FIRM IN AWARDS HOPE



Owner Sanjay Aggarwal and his mother, Shashi Aggarwal

A FAMILY-RUN spice business which operates from the kitchen of a suburban house in Walsall is in line to win a major award for small companies.

Spice Kitchen began after a discussion over Christmas dinner in 2012 when Sanjay Aggarwal came up with an idea for his parents, Shashi and Ashok, who were becoming a little bored in their retirement.

The idea was for Shashi to sell her high quality spices and homemade spice blends online. Sanjay created a listing on eBay, photographed her spice tin collection and listed it online on Christmas Day. They had had their first sale within 24 hours.

They later listed products on other channels, set up their own website, and by ex-

panding their range of products as well as creating a one stop spice shop, expanded quickly and organically, launching to the trade in September 2016 with a now rapidly expanding list of UK stockists.

The business also supplies spices to a number of chefs as well as other UK artisan producers, including butchers, chocolatiers and bakers. Spice Kitchen has now been named as a finalist in the 'Legacy' category in this year's Small Awards in association with Facebook, an award which has been established to recognise the achievements of small and micro-businesses.

Sanjay said: "We are so happy to be selected for the Small Awards and in particular for the Legacy Award. Our business is

very much a family business and at its heart is the spice knowledge passed down from my grandmother to my mum and from her to me. We are really looking forward to an amazing night and a chance to meet other small business owners."

Spice Kitchen will find out if it has won the award at a ceremony in London on May 25 hosted by comedian and television personality, Sue Perkins.

One of the individual category winners will also be named overall Small Business of the Year and Facebook will give that business £1000 worth of free advertising credit.

For more information, visit www.thessmallawards.uk or follow on Twitter @thesmallawards.

CRIME

Axe attack on man during burglary bid

BURGLARS attacked a householder with a baseball bat and an axe as he battled to protect his home in Aldridge.

The 57-year-old tried to keep the three men out of his home in Gretton Crescent when they smashed a kitchen door window in the early hours of the morning.

As he fought to keep them out he was hit with a baseball bat and what West Midlands Police believe was an axe.

The men all left after striking the man, who was then taken to hospital by a friend and treated for his injuries. He was released shortly after treatment.

Nothing was stolen. Anyone with information about Saturday's incident is urged to call 101 quoting 20WS/83200B/17.

EMERGENCY

Lucky escape after car rolls four times

TWO men were lucky to walk away from a crash after their car rolled over four times on a country lane.

Ambulance crews said the two casualties, in their 20s, were saved by the roll cage and the fact they were wearing seatbelts. Their car careered through bollards near the junction of Church Road and Church Lane in Walsall Wood around 4.30pm on Sunday before coming to land on its roof.

Both men escaped serious injury although the passenger was taken to Walsall Manor as a precaution.

DONATIONS

£40,000 on way for good causes

A TOTAL of £40,000 obtained from criminals has been allocated to a dozen good causes in Walsall. West Midlands Police's Crime and Commissioner David Jamieson has pledged the financial injections from the Active Citizens Fund.

A project for a new community art piece in Caldmore called 'Dreaming the Green' received the top amount along with a scheme called Keep Chuckery Tidy to reduce litter and fly-tipping in the area.

While £4,750 was pledged to drive down hate crime in the borough and £4,000 to help protect EU migrants from child sexual exploitation and employment exploitation.

INSIDE

BEAUTY OF THE BLACK COUNTRY



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Watchdog wants meeting with chiefs over patient delays

FEARS ON MANOR BED-BLOCKING

A HEALTH group has said it has concerns over the number of patients having their discharge delayed at the Manor Hospital.

Healthwatch Walsall is also seeking a meeting with hospital bosses after the Chronicle's sister newspaper, the Express & Star, reported on the lengthy delays some patients were facing before leaving.

One 82-year-old patient spent at least an extra 288 days in the hospital, and was still in there on Monday of this week, despite being declared medically fit to be discharged. Another patient left the hospital 64 days after being declared medically fit to leave.

In total more than 50 patients in the last three years stayed at least 28 days longer in the Manor than they needed to.

In light of the figures, Simon Fogell, chief officer for Healthwatch Walsall, said: "It gives us fair concern seeing the number of delayed discharges. I will be seeking conversations with the Manor. In 2015 we published a report looking at the number of discharges that resulted in readmission and it was only in July 2016 that the public accounts committee put out a report showing how people were facing long delays and how much that was costing."

Mr Fogell added: "We want people to have confidence in the Manor. We want to make sure people are getting a good service. I will be asking questions to Walsall Council and the Manor on why it is not working."

Philip Thomas-Hands, chief operating officer at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs the Manor, said: "We try our best to ensure timely and effective discharges. To help support this, we have developed a permanent discharge lounge facility at the Manor Hospital with staff aiming to complete as many discharges as possible before midday."

Officers are recommending the scheme be approved by council planners at a meeting tonight (Thurs).

Community leaders have welcomed the news that the plans are set to be accepted.

Councillor Ian Robertson, who represents the Blakenall ward, said: "I am particularly pleased that affordable housing will make up a good percentage of the development, allowing people to get on the property ladder."

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Family loses second pet to poisoning



Family pet Ollie who has died

A FAMILY cat has been killed by poisoning just months after his owner's other feline pet died in the same way.

Two-year-old Ollie died when he drank a large quantity of anti-freeze.

Owner Corinne Dubberley, who lives in Millard Road, Bilston, has been left devastated after her black and white shorthair died, despite best efforts to save him.

She said: "He could hardly walk so we put him straight into the cat box and took him to the vets, where they said he had been poisoned. They tried to flush

it out but he deteriorated quickly. They could not save him."

Ollie is Ms Dubberley's second pet to be killed by anti-freeze poisoning after she lost her other cat, Jess, the same way in January.

She also claimed there had been three other cats in the area who had suffered the same fate in the last 16 days.

RSPCA animal welfare officer Elaine Williams said: "This is a very upsetting incident, which has resulted in the death of a much-loved family pet.

"At this stage we do not know if these

were accidental incidents or deliberate but in the meantime we would ask everyone in the area to check where they keep their pesticides and chemicals and make sure they are secure and out of the way of cats.

"If anyone has any information, please contact the RSPCA on 0300 1238018."

Pet owners have been urged to be vigilant. If cats are showing symptoms of poisoning, the advice is to take them for veterinary treatment immediately. Signs include vomiting, appearing drunk, seizures and difficulty breathing.

Town hall to be leased out for just £1-a-year

A 'NEGLECTED' town hall is set to be leased out for just £1 a year after a charity pledged to invest £250,000 in order to fund improvements.

Walsall Council bosses are poised to approve a 25 year lease to see Darlaston Town Hall handed over to the Murray Hall Community Trust at a 'peppercorn rent'.

Proposals put forward by the Sandwell-based trust includes plans for the development of a community centre at the site, which dates back to 1888.

Darlaston Boxing Club holds weekly sessions there, while two weekly leisure groups and a dance and social club also use the 300-capacity site.

Those groups will get to stay and plans mooted by the trust include bringing in similar clubs, as well as a cinema club, job clubs, training sessions for volunteers and even potentially the creation of a local history museum on the site.

Activities

Paul Gordon, head of business change at the council, said: "Murray Hall Community Trust will invest £250,000 aimed at improving the facilities and development of a wide range of activities for the benefit of the local community.

"The trust aims to make optimum use of the facilities to enrich the lives of local residents.

"The trust's desire is to work closely with the 'third sector' and will directly involve the wider community in the running of the town hall."

Tony Marshall, who runs Darlaston Boxing Club, said: "I think this will be good for the community and for the clubs who use the site, it is welcome investment."

The site is currently run by the council but the authority has been looking for a voluntary or community sector organisation to take over its management for some time.

The Trust is also involved in supporting The Well food bank and the Working Together scheme, which helps people over 18 find training and job opportunities. Doug James, councillor for the town, said: "It is a long time coming, it has been awful to see it neglected for so long."

Who will be Miss Black Country?



Girls from the local areas get set for the final of Miss Black Country

JUDGING for who will be the next Miss Black Country is under way, with finalists put through their paces ahead of this weekend's final.

The 14-strong group had to tackle the sports round, as well as a Black Country quiz when they met in Dudley. Although some preliminary judging has taken place, the last day of the contest will be this weekend when a winner will be crowned. On Sunday the group met at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill for the first stage of judging.

They were met by Miss England regional director, Rachael Barker, before meeting the judges, including last year's Miss Wolverhampton, Faye Campbell. They were tested on intellect before tackling a quiz about the Black Country and taking part in a modelling round.

Ms Barker said: "The ladies have all worked so hard for the Miss Black Country competition so far, all raising money for Beauty With a Purpose, a charity helping disadvantaged children."

Miss Black Country will be crowned this Sunday at the Copthorne Hotel, for tickets, www.missenglandwm.com/tickets, or call Ms Barker on 07783 444320.

The 14 finalists are: Aisha Shahreene, Bethany Davidson, Carla Turner, Ellie Raybould, Eve Mallon, Evie Azzopardi, Faith Broome, Hannah Mitchell, Imogen Grace Collins, Isobel Lines, Leonie Constance McIntosh, Natasha Prece, Sophie-Rose Dickinson and Victoria Green.



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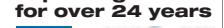
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Your chance to have say on number plates move

WEST Midlands Police is urging people to have their say on its use of vehicle number plate recognition devices.

The survey is seeking people's views on the technology that enables officers to track and trace a vehicle using its number plate.

The ANPR Public Engagement Survey is now available online.

A statement on the survey reads: "West Midlands Police are working to engage with members of the public around the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)."

"Your views and experiences are vital to the production of a meaningful strategy for the force. We recognise that a partnership approach will be the only way to deliver lasting solutions. Therefore consultation is key."

Following the questions, participants are then told why ANPR is used and how.

The survey states: "Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology is used within West Midlands Police to help detect, deter and disrupt criminality at a local, force, regional and national level, including tackling travelling criminals, Organised Crime Groups and terrorist threats."

"ANPR provides lines of enquiry and evidence in the investigation of crime and is used by forces throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland."

To access the survey and to take part, visit wh.surveypages.com/s.asp?pk=149190625419

Pensioner dies after collision

A WALSALL pensioner involved in a suspected hit and run has died in hospital.

The 80-year-old man is alleged to have been struck by a silver Mercedes on Lichfield Road, Walsall, last Wednesday morning, near to Rushall Care Home. Police said he passed away at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham on Friday afternoon.

A 41-year-old man, of no fixed address, has been charged with causing serious injury by dangerous driving, failing to stop at the scene of an accident and for having no insurance. He appeared in court on Friday and has been remanded in custody.

Officers are appealing for anyone who saw the car between Ablewell Street, where it was involved in a theft, believed to be of petrol, around 10.50am, and Brundall Close in Blakenall, where it was found abandoned around 2.40pm, to come forward.

The car suffered 'extensive windscreen damage' and would have been 'very distinctive', according to police.

Det Sgt Paul Hughes, from the Regional Collision Investigation Unit, said: "We are supporting the man's family at the sad time and our thoughts remain firmly with them."

Anyone with information is asked to contact DS Hughes on 101.

Hate crime in region at lowest level for 2 years

HATE crime in the West Midlands has fallen to one of its lowest levels for two years, new figures show.

There were around 250 incidents recorded in the region in January – the third lowest monthly total since the start of 2015. It follows a sharp spike in reported hate offences immediately after the EU referendum last year.

Hate crime is any incident in which the victim's race, religion, sexual orientation or disability is thought to be the perpetrator's motivation for committing the offence.

West Midlands Police recorded just shy of 500 hate offences in July last year – the highest ever – in the aftermath of the historic vote to leave the European Union. But it dropped sharply to under 350 incidents in August and went down a further 100 offences by January this year meaning it was at a level lower than throughout most of 2014.

In the days after the EU referendum, Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "We did not see a significant rise in hate crime in the days immediately following the referendum result. I need to be clear we will absolutely not tolerate crimes of hate."

Nationally there was a 58 per cent increase in reporting after the referendum which prompted senior officials to request weekly figures. However, the numbers recorded soon dipped back to normal levels, police bosses said. Forces normally see a spike in reported hate offences in July.

'False' memories fear on photos

NEW research has revealed more than four in 10 in the West Midlands believe they may have created a false memory after looking at a childhood photo.

The research by security retailer safe.co.uk suggests social media may be making false recollection worse, with 90 per cent of those surveyed being 'social cynical' and believing people only keep or upload their best pictures. From this, people create false 'happy' memories, according to the retailer.

Professor Martin Conway, head of psychology at City University London, said: "The new research has shown us just how fallible memory is and the use of social media is actually contributing to this false recall."

Village fun day out for all the family

FAMILIES will be praying for sunshine at the Rushall May Fayre on Monday May 1, with performances from singers Carla Yates, Miss Fortunes and a steel pan band, as well as a classic car show. The free event will be at Rushall Playing Fields in Rowley Place, from 10.30am to 4pm.

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Inspectors raise court cells concerns

COURT custody facilities across the West Midlands need to improve, according to prison bosses.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), led by chief inspector Peter Clarke, has raised 'significant concerns' with court cells and the way people are handled in courts in the region.

Among the concerns include the 'often unnecessary' use of handcuffs and detainees spending long periods in cells waiting on solicitors.

A report prepared by Mr Clarke after HMIP toured facilities across the region in December stated: "The

application of handcuffs in the physically secure court custody facilities was often unnecessary.

"There was a listings protocol, and we saw a number of cases in which children and vulnerable detainees were prioritised. However, several factors contributed to too many detainees being held in court custody for unnecessarily long periods.

"These included: delays in the attendance of duty solicitors and court interpreters and detainees being brought from prison early in the morning to Crown courts, when their

cases were not listed until the afternoon.

"Investment in many parts of the estate was required in order to address some of the unacceptable conditions we found for detainees."

Inspectors also found 'significant amounts' of graffiti on cell walls some of which was 'offensive'. However the courts were also praised for their 'good' working relationship with key agencies and their 'adequate' level of staffing.

Mr Clarke's report added: "Working relationships between the three key

agencies responsible for delivering the court custody provision were good. It was positive that the key stakeholders, in particular HM Courts and Tribunals Service, accepted responsibility for the overall care and welfare of detainees. As with other recent inspections, the provision was hampered by ineffective delivery of the cleaning and maintenance contract, for which none of the involved agencies was directly responsible.

Speaking after his report released, Mr Clarke said the inspection had been 'reasonably positive'.

CCG joy after it is moved out of special measures

WALSALL Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has been taken out of special measures, NHS bosses have said.

NHS England has taken the CCG out of special measures following improvement in its financial performance and governance.

In the CCGs' Annual Assessment for 2015/16, published last July, Walsall CCG was rated 'inadequate'. Serious concerns were raised over the group's finances as it battled to find savings of more than £20 million in just one year.

Since then, NHS England has been working closely with Walsall CCG to help manage its financial recovery and strengthen its governance.

Alison Tonge, director of commissioning operations for NHS England in the West Midlands, said: "It is essential that the people of Walsall have confidence that the CCG is able to commission safe, sustainable health services now and in the future.

"The announcement means we recognise all the work and progress that the CCG has made so far on governance and financial management in particular.

Reassurance

"We will continue to work with Walsall CCG over the coming months to ensure that all remaining actions are completed."

Walsall CCG hailed the news as 'excellent' and thanked staff.

Dr Anand Rischie, the chair of the CCG, said: "This is excellent news and it should give patients, the public and our partners reassurance that we are continually improving local health services. Thank you to the governing body, our staff, our partners and to NHS England for their continued support and guidance.

"We recognise that there is still much work to be done and we will continue to work closely with NHS England and local partners to make the necessary improvements."

Paul Maubach, the accountable officer for the CCG, added: "We are pleased that special measures have been lifted but we know that there is still much more work to be done to ensure that we continue to improve local health services for the people of Walsall."

"Our focus will remain on ensuring the provision of safe, high quality services for the population of Walsall whilst delivering good value for money and effective performance."

Keyed up for Bat Out Of Hell role



Pianist and conductor Robert Emery, from Pelsall, who is heading to London with Bat out of Hell

AS a small boy playing his piano along to Top of the Pops at his Pelsall home, Robert Emery dreamed of hitting the big time.

Now a professional conductor and pianist, he has landed a role working on the Bat Out Of Hell musical – one of the UK's biggest new stage shows.

He was chosen by Grammy Award-winning record producer Jim Steinman who was behind Meat Loaf's Bat Out Of Hell

album back in 1977 – one of the best-selling records of all time.

Forty years after its release is has been converted into a stage show with 34-year-old Mr Emery conducting the music.

Mr Emery, who has worked on musical projects across the world including working alongside Russell 'The Voice' Watson, has been conducting the show at the Opera House in Manchester since January before it heads to London Col-

iseum for 56 nights from June 5.

The former St Michael's Primary School and Blue Coat Church of England secondary school pupil said: "It's been a dream of Jim Steinman's to put Bat Out of Hell on stage for years.

"I was chosen by Jim to conduct the music each night and it's been a real privilege and honour.

"The set is the largest I've seen and the production is massive. I think the budget is £17 million."

NEWS IN BRIEF

April joins crop of salon finalists

A HAIRDRESSING apprentice at Walsall College is competing against the finest crop of talent in the Midlands. April Morgan, 18, an advanced level three hairdressing apprentice at Boyd's Hair Design in Cannock, is just one of 20 budding hairdressers who have made it through to the regional heat of the Wella XPO-SURE.



April impressed judges with her photographic entries of commercial cut and colour looks.

Top prizes in the competition include £1,000 of Wella Professionals training vouchers, a £500 tool kit, a chance to work with a top hairdresser for the day and educational support for a year.

Historic house's summer tours

FAMILIES are being encouraged to take a tour of a historic house this summer. The Manor House Museum, on Hall Green Road, West Bromwich, is holding free summer tours every Sunday from July 30 to September 10.

The tours run from 11am to 3pm.

Visitors will be given the chance to explore the 13th-century building, try on armour and play medieval games.

It will also provide an opportunity for people to see some of the house's rooms as they might have looked in the late medieval period.

The tours last around an hour and start at 11.30am and 1pm. There is no need to pre-book. Refreshments and cream tea will be available.

Food firm set to appear overseas

A WILLENHALL food company is to exhibit at a trade show in Cologne for a second time. Middleton Foods, supported by the Department for International Trade in the Black Country, first appeared there in 2015.

Thanks to an exhibitor grant from the Black Country Chamber of Commerce the company, cooked British fish and chips for all the visitors and served thousands of portions over the five days of the show.

This was Middleton's first overseas exhibition and was research to gauge the size of the market for their products outside of the UK.

Focus on Camra dates

THE Walsall branch of the Campaign for Real Ale is inviting members to an open meeting at The Duke of Cambridge in Short Heath on May 2 at 7.30pm. The presentation of its cider pub of the year award will be at Chase Inn, Brownhills, on May 6 at noon, and members will visit Walsall Cricket Club on June 24 to present the branch club of the year trophy.

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45pc increase in temp vacancies

DEMAND for temporary professionals in the West Midlands has risen by 45 per cent in the year to March, according to the Association of Professional Staffing Companies.

The data, provided by recruitment software company, Innovantage, revealed that in addition to a rise in temporary roles, permanent vacancies also experienced an increase, rising 18 per cent for the year.

Demand for professionals rose notably across sectors including IT and media, which recorded uplifts of 38 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

Charity steps up in bowel cancer fight

A POLL commissioned by Bowel Cancer UK's Step up for 30 fundraising challenge has revealed 64 per cent of adults living in the Midlands were not aware a lack of regular physical activity increased the risk of bowel cancer.

Research shows regularly taking part in 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, such as cycling or fast walking every week, can decrease your risk by as much as 12 per cent.

A recent survey revealed more than 20 million people in the UK did not reach or exceed the minimum target. For more information, log on to www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/stepupfor30/

Jump for joy with inflatable course

THE world's longest, continuous inflatable obstacle course will visit Wolverhampton later this year. The course, which is more than 1,000 feet long, is on a UK tour will be at Wolverhampton Racecourse on June 30 to July 2.

They will host events where teams of five will compete against each other in a timed competition. Trophies will be awarded for the fastest three teams each week. Full details at thelabyrinthchallenge.com

House woes having an impact on health

MORE than one in four adults in the West Midlands suffer mental health issues due to housing problems.

The report from Shelter and ComRes shows 28 per cent have experienced problems including long-term stress, anxiety and depression due to a housing problem.

Anyone struggling with bad housing and homelessness in the West Midlands can contact Shelter Birmingham on 0344 5151800 or go to the website, www.England.shelter.org.uk

German market dates

DETAILS for the ever-popular German market in Birmingham, the biggest of its kind outside Germany and Austria, have been announced. This year's market, known as the Frankfurt Christmas Market, will start on November 16 and finished earlier than last year, on Christmas Eve.

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DRIVERS in Staffordshire have received nearly £350,000 in compensation in the past four years because of potholes - with new figures revealing the worst roads in the county.

Figures obtained in a Freedom of Information Act request show Staffordshire County Council shelled out a whopping £347,389.60 between 2012 and 2016 to drivers whose cars were damaged because of the pothole

problem plaguing the county's roads. The figures also reveal the problem roads around the county, including Junction 11 of the M6, Envile Common Road in South Staffordshire, Keepers Lane in Codsall and Burnhill Green Road near Pattingham.

The single highest payout for a driver came in 2014 when one motorist received £4,621.65 after a collision with a pothole at the junction

of Somerset Road and Kent Road in Stafford. Another mammoth payout came in 2015 when one driver received £3,574.98 in compensation after their car was badly damaged on Langley Road on the outskirts of Wolverhampton.

Cannock Chase councillor Gordon Alcott, who previously claimed there must be a pothole on every road in the district, said: "The one before for the

toll road has got a series of craters, that is how bad they are. Then the island for junction 11 itself has potholes all the way around it. Motorists are having to try and weave their way around them, it is very dangerous."

In total 3,955 successful and unsuccessful compensation claims due to potholes were submitted to Staffordshire County Council between 2012 and 2016.

Potholes: Motorists are paying the price



MOTORISTS are paying the price of the crumbling roads across the region our potholes campaign has uncovered with drivers contacting us to reveal damage being caused to their cars.

We have received a number of images of damaged tyres and alloys caused by vehicles hitting potholes as readers highlight some of the worst roads in Staffordshire and the Black Country.

And a Freedom of Information act request has shown how much is being paid out in compensation by Staffordshire County Council because of our pot-hole-ridden roads.

Councillor George Adamson, who represents the Hednesford and Rawnsley areas which have been highlighted as a concern by readers, has welcomed the *Chronicles*' campaign.

He said: "I welcome the *Chronicles*' Top of the Pots campaign. It highlights one of the major concerns of local people. Staffordshire has become the pothole capital of England."

Invest

"We need to invest in improving our roads and do it urgently. Staffordshire residents deserve nothing less. The pothole plague has to be dealt with, and sooner rather than later."

This week reader Sue Gulley has told us of damage caused to the wheel and tyre of her car after hitting a pothole in South Staffordshire.

She said: "The hole was full of water so we never saw it. The road is very bad, Hilton Lane.

"We were on our way to attend my Dad's 80th Birthday meal with family at Coven and due to the incident we had to cancel.

"My husband was filthy having to change the tyre at the side of the road and by time we had done this was not worth us going, an event which meant a lot to all of us and was ruined due to the council not dealing with issues that have already been reported to them, the road is a disgrace.

"I pay my road tax, why should I then pay for a repair that was caused due to no fault of my own. I shall fight for my money back."

Russell Withey suffered damage to his wheel when he hit a pothole near Gentleshaw Common in Staffordshire, as drivers turn off Chorley Road into Com-



Raymond Drury is complaining about potholes in Romsley Road, Stourbridge



Russell Withey suffered damage to his wheel from a pothole near Gentleshaw Common



Sue Gulley measures the depth of the pothole which caused damage to the wheel and tyre of her car



Simon Hall of Great Wyrley sent in pictures of the terrible condition of the roads nearby

about 10 potholes and there's nowhere to drive around, you just have to let the car take a battering."

The *Chronicle* has been inundated with reports of huge potholes and badly damaged roads since launching our campaign a month ago. We want to identify the top 10 pothole blackspots on the region to flag up to our councils.

If you know of any pothole-ridden routes or deep holes email details, preferably with a picture, your name and any comments you would like to make to Sue.Attwater@expressandstar.co.uk or drop us a line at Editorial, The Chronicle, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

More than 200 people charged over stab attacks

MORE than 200 people in the West Midlands have been charged with stabbing offences in the last three years, according to a police report.

The report, released by West Midlands Police, revealed that a total of 227 across the region were charged with stabbing offences since 2014 - 76 of these were from Wolverhampton.

In Sandwell, 64 people have been charged, with Dudley having 45 offenders and Walsall 42.

In 2014, Wolverhampton saw 22 people charged for stabbing offences, rising to 29 in 2015. Last year, the number of people charged fell to 25.

According to the figures, a total of 11 people in Wolverhampton last year were charged with using a kitchen knife in stabbing offences, whilst two used a lock knife and 12 used what has been deemed 'knife unknown.' A total of 35 kitchen knives were used in offences from 2014 to 2016.

Kitchen knives were the most used weapon used in the recorded offences. In Sandwell, there were 20 instances where kitchen knives were used where offenders were later charged. In Walsall, 13 knives were used from 2014 to 2016 in offences where individuals were later charged and 13 were also used in Dudley in this period.

Walsall has also seen an increase in the number of people charged with stabbing offences - from just 10 in 2014 to 17 in 2015. However, there was a slight decrease in 2016 to 15 people charged.

Leader of the Conservatives for Walsall, Councillor Mike Bird said: "I think that knife crime is a problem across the UK. Unfortunately, it seems that these idiots carry a knife for bravado and then with a moment of provocation, bravado can quickly turn into tragedy."

Police appeal for help in manhunt

POLICE have launched an appeal to track down a man who is wanted on recall to prison.

He is being sought after breaking the conditions of his release.

Hubert Locke, aged 38, is from Aldridge, and reportedly absconded from an address in Stonnall Road on Friday, April 14.

Police officers are keen to locate him as soon as possible.

Locke is a white man, standing about 5ft 8in tall, of medium build and with short dark hair.

Officers believe that he is now in Worcestershire or the West Midlands areas.

Anyone who sees him, or knows of his whereabouts, has been urged to contact officers at West Mercia Police on 101.



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Doormat bags are not that charitable

A COLLECTION bag with a big logo for a cancer charity dropped on the doormat a couple of weeks ago. Having long been a sceptic about the organisations which carry out these collections, I put it back on the doorstep straight away. And despite the bag saying it would be collected the following Thursday, you will not be too surprised to find that it is still in my possession.

Anyway, sick of the sight of the thing, I decided to take a closer look. The small print on the back revealed it was not from a charity at all, but a private company which makes donations from its revenue towards the charity featured boldly on the front.

A bit more digging around reveals the same company has twice carried out unlicensed – and therefore illegal – collections in Bolton. It has also been stripped of its licence to operate in Torfaen, Monmouthshire, after donating just £12.50 to charity from a collection worth more than £250. That is a pitiful five per cent.

If I have any used clothes, jewellery or books that I want to give to charity, I think I will be taking them to my local charity shop in future.

□ □ □

THE marketing team for nasty American lager brand Budweiser has caused a bit of controversy with its latest publicity stunt, which saw staff roll up in a 4x4 and start handing out cans of Bud Light to vagrants in the street.

I guess that's what they call knowing your market.

□ □ □

MEANWHILE, down in the Big Smoke a somewhat disgruntled electrician returned a burger he bought from McDonald's, claiming somebody had already taken a bite out of it.

The burger chain has investigated closed-circuit television footage, and says it is a mystery how it happened.

But it does remind me of the time that I bought some pork scratching from a rather down-at-heel corner shop in the Black Country, only to find they had already been opened.

Returning, somewhat unhappily to the shop, I explained to the assistant what had happened. Her reply?

"It'll save yo openin' em, wo' it?"

□ □ □

THERE are some rather strange special offers on at the W H Smith branch at Heathrow Airport at the moment. One promotion offers 48 Cadbury's Flakes for £45, there is a similar deal on Kit-Kats, while you can also get 24 Bounties for £22. Doesn't strike me as particularly good value, but you always pay through the nose at airports.

I bet whoever buys them will end up sat next to me.

Remember warning on the unexpected



Theresa May – will she return with a bigger Conservative majority?



Liz Truss announces 'fast track' system to remove foreign deportation dodgers



President Erdogan – success in referendum in Turkey means he can rule as sultan

Election: We May all be surprised

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



WE all know what ought to happen. If you believe the polls and rely on past experience, Theresa May will be returned after the General Election with a bigger Conservative majority. Labour will be stumped and Jeremy Corbyn will be sacked. But these are not normal times and the old rules may no longer apply. So I would not put a large bet on any of the above predictions coming true. And we could do worse in the coming weeks than remember Harold Macmillan's warning of the unexpected things that can upset every plan: "Events, dear boy, events."

JUSTICE Secretary Liz Truss has announced a new "fast track" system to remove foreign deportation dodgers within 25 days of their claims being rejected. We'll believe that when we see it, thanks.

"HUMANITY is destined for eternity, and death is the means by which we reach that joyful beginning," declared an archbishop on Radio Four's Prayer for the Day. If clerics are to be allowed to broadcast such claims, they should at least be obliged to carry the caveat that professional psychics and mediums are forced to display by law: "For entertainment purposes only."

SOME pundits say President Erdogan's success in the referendum in Turkey will give him enough power to rule as a 21st century sultan. This is bad news for his wife Emine who will, of course, become a sultana. But maybe, as his nation's current leader, this is Erdogan's raisin d'être. That's enough dried-fruit nonsense.

I WAS walking down a street the other day, clocking the cars on the drives, and realised to my surprise that more than half of them were diesels. So quite why the proposed diesel-scrapage scheme will work is anyone's guess. Figures of up to £2,000 have been ban-

died about for vehicles more than 10 years old, on condition you buy a cleaner non-diesel car. But who in their right mind would willingly take that sum in exchange for, say, a 2007 Range Rover which still has a book value of £10,000 or more? And can anyone guarantee that this scheme will not be hijacked by Britain's thriving car-crime industry? The theory is that tens of thousands of perfectly sound diesel vehicles will be taken off the road and crushed. But how many will be spirited away in shipping containers, to carry on polluting in some other far smoggier corner of the Third World? Whitehall's bean counters are said to be doing the sums. So, too, I bet are the ungodly.

THE world's oldest person, Emma Morana, has died aged 117 in northern Italy. These so-called supercentenarians rarely agree on the reasons for their long lives. One will advocate being teetotal while another will swear by a daily double whisky. One will praise chocolate but another will say it's all due to pickled shark meat or yak yoghurt. Mrs Morana attributed her great age to her family's genes, two raw eggs a day and chucking out her abusive husband in 1938. Take your pick.

THE usual legion of instant experts has been queuing up on social media to assure us that North Korea's missiles which rumbled through Pyongyang last week are not missiles at all but an assortment of plastic and plywood models. See? You can tell by the wonky warheads. One Daily Telegraph reader claims he saw a similar parade in North Korea some years ago and

the "missiles" were actually made of wood. Now, this may be ringing a bell with some older readers. Back in the 1930s, before the Second World War, one of the most popular urban myths concerned a friend of friend who had been on a cycling holiday in Germany and came across a military exercise. And guess what? The German "tanks" were no such thing. They were just cars covered with hardboard sheets to look like tanks, with drainpipes for guns. It's just Adolf pulling the wool over our eyes, right? A couple of years later, thousands of Adolf's tanks, with real armour and real guns, swept the British Army aside and conquered France in a matter of weeks.

IF you believe it is possible to knock somebody out with a cricket bat for just a few minutes, rather than killing or merely stunning them, and if you also believe that a young, terrified and drunken teenager can be forced to rape an unconscious woman against his will, then you presumably think the finale of Broadchurch (ITV) was brilliant. The rest of us acknowledge that some of the acting was excellent. But the plot? Absolute piffle.

LAST words on our recent trip to Cornwall. However they may be marketed, the Lost Gardens of Heligan are not all that lost. It only took us 20 minutes to find them.

LIKEWISE, the 'Lost Valley' within the Lost Gardens was remarkably easy to locate. You just buy the map at the ticket office and follow it to the place marked 'Lost Valley'. I may be missing something.

OUR changing language. A kerflaver, invented accidentally by a pal at the weekend, is a cross between a kerfuffle and a palaver. It's a bit like a palfuffe.

TALKING POINT



Long and winding road is part of holiday

TAKE a look at this family enjoying their ideal holiday, free from the strains of everyday life. There's the children, itching to get onto that golden beach, then there's Mom, telling them to not go too far into the sea, and what about Dad? Well, he's quite happy reading his newspaper, thank you very much.

It's a delightful scene, and one which thousands of families will be replicating this summer (all right, Dad will probably be tapping away at his smartphone apps, but you get the picture). And a picture it most definitely is, because this family doesn't exist. They are actually on a poster above the table where I'm enjoying a pint and a bite to eat in a pub during a well-earned week's holiday.

The poster is a reprint of a British Railways advert from many years ago, in the days when travelling by train to your chosen resort was full of sunny promise.

These days, the station being advertised no longer exists, the site now obliterated by a modern housing development. In fact, the line isn't there either, with little evidence of there ever having been a rail service in that part of the world.

Fast forward to the hectic pace of the 21st Century and far from being part of the holiday, the journey to any holiday destination is merely a means to an end, the aim being to get along the motorway and A-roads in the fastest time possible, not forgetting a break at the services, of course.

However, there can be an enforced treat in store when you least expect it. In my particular case, the motorway was closed, in both directions, due to a lorry fire, necessitating a lengthy detour to get round the blockage. There was nothing else for it but to look for a route that ran roughly parallel with the motorway . . . which was where the overlooked delights of this island we call Great Britain began to reveal themselves.

Yes, it was a long and winding road with countless irritants such as traffic lights, speed limits, and queues to get through bottlenecks, but it soon started to create an idea of what going on holiday by car used to be like. It wouldn't have surprised me to see a friendly bobbie or two waving cheerily to passing motorists.

The scenery was better for a start, and some of the towns and villages looked as if they actually might be a good choice for a holiday themselves. But in the spring sunshine, the overall impression was that this was where the holiday really started, adding as it did to the mounting expectation.

That family in the BR poster would have approved of this leisurely diversion. I just hope Dad could stay calm in the face of cries of "Are we nearly there, yet?" coming from the back seat.

Wherever you go, and however you choose to get there, remember to make the most of every minute!

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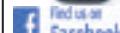
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The manner of our departure remains a massive area of contention. Bringing back control to our laws and borders may be widely supported.

The Single Market, customs union, security, research, ending free movement require further explanation.

Young people must wonder what and Labour, will not provide solutions

Issues not on track for strikes

AFTER reading S Vaughan's letter about railway workers' strikes (15 April), I remain completely in the dark about two issues which the author clearly considers important, but which he/she fails to elucidate.

One is when the strike took place. I have no idea when the Grand National takes place. It may well be that railway union leaders, as good working-class men, are indifferent to the 'sport of kings' and had no idea that a strike would coincide with the race.

The other, more important, issue is that Vaughan never bothers to say why the railway workers struck. When I was a trade union representative, I from time to time recommended to my colleagues that we go on strike.

Recent railway disputes have usually been about staffing levels, with serious implications both for employees' job security and passenger safety. These reasons are certainly not trivial, and it would never for one second cross my mind to consider such industrial action a reason not to support renationalisation.

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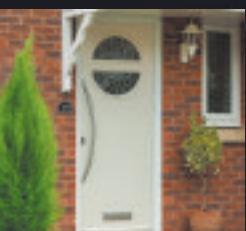
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Kids club urged to make improvements by Ofsted

A KIDS' club in the Black Country has been told to improve by the education watchdog.

St Giles Kids Club, based at St Giles C of E Church on Walsall Street in Willenhall, has been rated requires improvement by Ofsted.

The watchdog criticised the club for not giving enough support to its children and for not passing on clear information to parents about their children.

Ofsted rated the club's leadership, quality of teaching, personal development and outcomes as requires improvement.

A report prepared after inspectors visited the club last month states: "The provider has not ensured all staff have supervision meetings. Staff have not developed their skills well enough to enable them to meet children's needs in a consistently good manner.

Weaknesses

"Self-evaluation is not rigorous enough, and does not take account of key weaknesses that affect the learning and care of children."

In order to improve the club has been told to obtain information from other providers where its children attend as well as providing 'all parents with information about their child's key person and their role to support children in the club' and ensuring all parents receive daily information about children's experiences in the club.

However the report added: "Children have fun and are happy in the club. Children learn about other communities through planned activities. They learn first hand about cultures as they mix with others from a wide range of backgrounds.

"Children are well behaved and learn to treat others with respect."

Yvonne Greenaway, who runs the club, said: "I feel the report was a little bit harsh. The report says we do not obtain sufficient information from other providers but we are in regular discussion with St Giles C of E Primary School."

Brush with law ends in jail



Paul White, left, before being sent to prison and right, during the robbery with his face mostly covered by a mask at hood on CCTV

AN ARMED ROBBER has been jailed after his attempts to storm a fast food restaurant led to a brush with the law.

CCTV images of Paul White, aged 34, from Flaxhall Street, Walsall, were captured by security cameras as he tried to hold up McDonalds on Bescot Drive, Walsall, on the evening of December 20.

Along with two other armed men, he threatened terrified staff and customers with a handgun as the store manager was frogmarched to an office to demand the store's takings. Afterwards, CCTV footage was

circulated amongst West Midlands Police officers, one who saw the footage recognised the criminal's face, prompting his arrest on December 29.

Before the matter was taken to court, White denied any involvement in the robbery, however he made a crucial error on the evening itself. He left a rucksack behind, which was found with a used toothbrush inside, covered in his DNA, leaving him with no choice but to plead guilty. He was jailed for seven years and two months at Wolverhampton Crown Court on April 10.



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Fundraising move to help Kyle's family

A FUNDRAISING appeal to help the family of a man who was killed in a car crash with funeral costs has been started by one of his friends.

Kyle Bullock, aged 21, died after a crash between an MG Rover which he was the passenger in and a van at the junction of Fryers Road and Leamore Lane in Bloxwich. The smash happened on April 9 and Mr Bullock was confirmed dead at the scene.

Since then tributes have poured in at the scene of the crash, with numerous flowers, cards and balloons

left. Now a page has been set up on online fundraising site Go Fund Me by Amie Keogh, a friend of Mr Bullock's, in order to give him 'the send off he deserves'. In just over a week, more than £1,000 has been raised by 57 donors, pushing the campaign towards its £5,000 goal.

Writing on the webpage, Amie said: 'I am trying to raise money for my best friend's funeral and take some ease off his family in this hard time. Please keep sharing and donating for Kyle as it will help his family give him

the best send off he deserves.' A statement released by West Midlands Police on behalf of his family said: 'Kyle was a loving brother, nephew and a father who we will all miss so much.'

'He is now back with his mom who he never got over losing.' A 28-year-old man who was driving the car was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving. He has been released on bail pending further enquiries. Another passenger, a man aged 20, remains in critical condition with multiple injuries.

May's battle cry for the Black Country



On the campaign trail – Theresa May gives a speech at Netherton Conservative Club during a visit to the region

THERESA May says the Black Country is a 'very important battleground' ahead of the 'most important election' of her lifetime. Her comments come as the Conservatives look to snatch seats away from Jeremy Corbyn's Labour in Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton at June's General Election.

The Tories have earmarked Walsall North, Dudley North and Wolverhampton South West as key targets.

Speaking at Netherton Conservative Club on Saturday, Mrs May said: 'The Black Country is very important and is going to be a very important bat-

leground for the next election. Every vote that is cast here is going to be important for the future of our country. It will be a vote for a stronger Britain in the future.'

Dudley South MP Mike Wood said: 'This visit shows that she is determined to win not only in Dudley South but also others seats in the area.'

'Dudley North, Walsall North, Wolverhampton South West – these are all seats Conservatives will be fighting extremely hard for.'

Earlier the Prime Minister had been out campaigning around Alderdale

Avenue in Sedgley. The street is in Dudley North, which Labour MP Ian Austin fought hard to defend at the last election. In 2010 he had a majority of just 1.1 per cent.

Alderdale Avenue is also on the border of Wolverhampton South West, which has swung between the main parties in the past two elections.

Labour had just a two per cent majority at the last general election and the Conservatives are hopeful of overturning that, especially after current MP Rob Marris announced last week he would not be seeking re-election.



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Direct Specs have enabled thousands of local people to make huge savings on all types of frames and lenses. They sell the same quality frames as any other High Street optician but at a fraction of the price. And with over 500 styles to choose from, they offer fantastic choice as well as great value for money.

Direct Specs was set up in 1997 and permanently changed the optical market by manufacturing glasses and selling direct to the public, cutting out the middle man and passing on huge savings to customers.

Relocated

Since their first store opening, the firm has grown considerably, with a cutting-edge manufacturing plant near Birmingham, outlets across the Midlands and a busy on-line store.

They recently relocated from the Broadway to larger, more modern premises on Bridgeman Street, where they now have even more frames on display. But Direct Specs aren't just about low prices; customer satisfaction is given top priority which is why their customer base has continued to grow year after year.

While many retailers are still struggling with the impact of the recession and competition from the internet, Direct Specs have succeeded



Members of staff at the ready, inside the premises at Bridgeman Street in Walsall

by offering products at on-line prices but with the benefit of being able to try-on frames and get one-to-one advice and fitting.

While the choice of frames is obvious to anyone who sees it, the range of lenses is almost as diverse. Within the broad distance, reading, bifocal and varifocal types there

are a huge number of individual variations encompassing thinner lenses, the latest Transitions lenses and varifocals that are 100 per cent custom-made rather than being an 'off the peg' design. Add to these the various treatments such as anti-reflection coating, tinting and UV-filters and the choice is vast. To

ensure that customers choose the appropriate lens type, Direct Specs only employ optician-trained staff with significant experience.

If you're in the market for new glasses, grab your prescription and head for their store on Bridgeman Street (the road between the Saddler's Centre car park and Manor Hospital).

Customers can park for free right outside and take their time choosing frames and discussing their requirements.

As well as offering a money-back guarantee, anyone with an NHS Voucher or employer's 'Eycare Voucher' can choose from a huge range of completely free specs.



The exterior of the shop, which is in the 'factory outlet' concept

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Roan's road to victory sees him win silver



Back home, with a silver medal, Roan McDermott, aged 11, of Oldbury, after competing in the Romanian championships

AN 11-year-old has returned home from competing in the WUKF European Championships in Romania for Team GB – bagging a silver medal. Roan McDermott, from Oldbury, has followed in his father's footsteps by taking up karate.

Father Clive McDermott also once competed in the England squad for karate when he was younger.

But now Roan, who studies at Moat Farm Junior School and trains at Dudley Shukokai at Thorns Community College in Brierley Hill, has competed across the country and Ireland but his trip to Romania from April 5 to 10 was his first competition further afield.

He won the medal in the Kumite fighting category. Mother Theresa McDermott said she was 'immensely proud' of Roan. She said: 'Roan started training when he was six and has followed in his dad's footsteps because he used to do it when he was younger too – he was in the England squad. He's done competitions all over the country and one in Ireland at the end of last year but this was his first major tournament. There were around 2,000 people at the championships but he was up against 38 others.'

'We're very proud of him. He did seven fights one after another without stopping so he's done amazingly well.'

Roan is now looking for a sponsor – anyone interested in sponsoring him can contact 07983678848.

Region is shamed over poor air quality

SANDWELL and Wolverhampton are among the top 10 worst pollution hotspots outside London, it has been revealed.

The West Midlands contains three of the UK's most polluted locations when it comes to exposing nursery children to illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide – thanks to its motorways and dual carriageways.

By Marion Brennan

In Birmingham there are 32 nurseries and 30 schools within 150 metres of a road where emissions of nitrogen dioxide are above the legal limit. James Burn, the Green party candidate for West Midlands mayor, said: 'The West Midlands is facing an air pollution crisis.'

The shocking truth is that 3,000 people a year here die prematurely from breathing our dirty air.

Outside of London, the top 10 local authority areas most affected are: Birmingham, Sandwell, Nottingham, Plymouth, Manchester, Leicester, Hampshire, Leeds, Wolverhampton and Salford.

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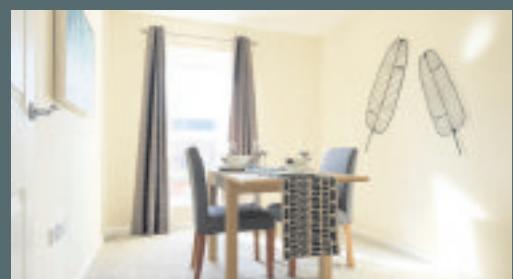
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Cracking day of museum mirth



Wolly the entertainer gets set for the day ahead at the museum



Welcome – Kris Katchitt



Juggling Jim entertains



That's entertainment – Sarah Carrot of Moon Carrot puppet show

HUNDREDS of children and their families visited Walsall Leather Museum for an Easter fun day.

Held every Easter for almost 20 years, the fun day saw more than 300 youngsters take part in a variety of different activities.

The activities on offer included puppet and clown shows, with the likes of Wolly the Clown, Juggling Jim and Kris Katchitt entertaining the children.

Popular

Walk-about entertainers also went through the crowds and children took part in art and leather craft sessions.

Another event that proved to be popu-

lar was face painting, with a long queue of children waiting in line for their chance.

Francesca Cox, assistant curator of the Leather Museum, said that this year's event was even more popular than last year's.

She said: "This year has certainly been busier than last year. It's our best day of the year, the one we look forward

to the most. It's been rammed. I'd say there's at least 300-400 people."

"It's been such a great day with so many kids running around. It's also our happiest day of the year. People spend all day here."

"The weather's helped. It's better for us when it's not sunny!"

The museum had more Easter events planned for later in the week.

The next event, due on Saturday, from 10am to 3pm, Darling Daisy - Introduction to Goldwork Embroidery Workshop for Adults with Ann Howden is fully booked.

For more information, visit www.cms.walsall.gov.uk/leathermuseum/ or call 01922 652288. The museum is located in a restored Victorian factory building in Littleton Street West.

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Ellie Simmonds seen with the medals she won in Rio at last year's paralympics

Champ Ellie in the running for magazine gong

WALSALL'S swimming sensation Ellie Simmonds OBE is in line for a new gong which would put her alongside the likes of Serena Williams and Kelly Holmes.

Ellie, who was a former pupil at Aldridge School, has been nominated in Glamour magazine's women of the year competition.

The gold medal winner is up against the likes of Paralympic cyclist Dame Sarah Storey, heptathlete Jessica Ennis-Hill and Nicola Adams in the 'sportswoman' category, which was first won by Serena Williams in 2004. The event itself will be

hosted by Jennifer Saunders on June 6 in London. Ellie wrote on Twitter that she was 'honoured to be nominated with these amazing people' as she shared a link that allowed her fans to vote for her to clinch the gong.

This isn't the first time that Ellie's character and personality has led to her being recognised outside of her sporting field. In 2008, she was named BBC Young Sports Personality of The Year, after becoming Britain's youngest ever athlete when she competed in the Paralympics in Beijing. She won the 100m and 400m freestyle aged 13.

Last year at Rio, she defended her 200m individual medley, in a new world record, and clinched bronze in the 400m freestyle.

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Bader in Shell's Percival Proctor replaced by the Gemini



Shell's Gemini G-AMGF, awaiting collection by Bader



Another Gemini as yet unpainted at the fuel pumps



Shell's Gemini G-AMGF, awaiting collection by Bader

Aircraft had flying ace Bader at helm

IN the early 1950s there were two companies building aircraft at Wolverhampton Airport, Pendeford. And one of the aircraft they built was to be flown by the famous legless flying ace, Douglas Bader.

Boulton Paul Aircraft was producing its advanced trainer, the Balliol at the time, but the Airport was run by Wolverhampton Aviation, agents for Miles Aircraft at Woodley Airfield, near Reading.

When Miles went into liquidation Wolverhampton Aviation bought up a large stock of unfinished parts, and from them built six Gemini twin-engined light aircraft, but fitted Gipsy Major engines instead of the usual lower-powered Cirrus engines.

The third of these Geminis, registered G-AMGF, was sold to Shell Refining & Marketing in March 1951, and was to be flown by the legendary Sir Douglas Bader.

Bader had joined the RAF in 1928 but lost both his legs in a flying accident while performing aerobatics at Woodley.

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

He managed to rejoin the RAF after war broke out and became a fighter pilot, despite having tin legs. He led a squadron and then a wing of three squadrons during the Battle of Britain shooting down 22 German aircraft, with four shared victories.

In August 1941 he was shot down over Europe and captured. He made several escape attempts before being repatriated at the end of the war and retiring from the RAF as a Group Captain.

He went to work for Shell, and flew their Proctor light aircraft, until that was replaced by the Gemini, which was collected from Pendeford by the great man himself.

He became Managing Director of Shell Aviation and retired in 1969.

A film was made of his life story entitled Reach for the Sky, with Kenneth More playing the lead role. Bader died of a heart attack in 1982.



Douglas Bader on the wing of a Hurricane fighter

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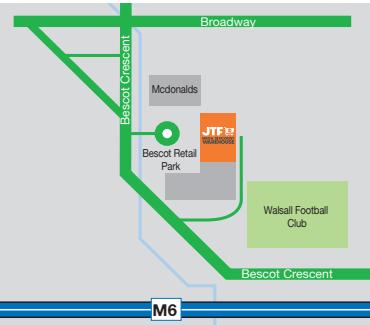
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Former police chief facing case probe

A FORMER West Midlands and Staffordshire Chief Constable is facing possible investigation over the handling of an historical child sex abuse case.

The complaint against Chris Sims centres on why a meeting between him and alleged victims of abuse at Tettenhall College in Wolverhampton never took place – despite a request by then-Home Secretary Theresa May.

The Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said it had received a complaint from alleged victims Andrew Wood and Mark Shelton. It is understood another police force is to be asked to look into the complaint, but the pair have also been offered a meeting with current Chief Constable Dave Thompson and a representative of Mr Jamieson's office.

Mr Wood, originally of Wombourne, and Mr Shelton, of Shifnal, were expecting a meeting with Mr Sims in early 2015 to discuss problems with their case. It followed an intervention by Mrs May in February of that year after it was brought to her attention by then Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South West Paul Uppal.

At the time, prosecutors were deliberating whether to bring charges against ex-Tettenhall College head Colin Cope after video footage emerged showing him driving, carrying a table and climbing stairs eight months after being too sick to stand trial. He was charged with 11 offences on boys at the Wolverhampton school. He denied any wrongdoing.

Mr Wood and Mr Shelton were among five ex-pupils paid a total of £129,000 in an out-of-court settlement in 2012 by the boarding school. The school did not admit liability. Cope died aged 84 in March 2015.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "We are aware of the complaint and are seeking to arrange a meeting to discuss the topics raised."

Mr Sims declined to comment.

Egg-stremely enjoyable



The Easter Bunny with hamper winner, shopper Natalie Jones

SADDLERS Shopping Centre in the heart of Walsall had an Egg-cellent day of free family fun to mark the Easter holidays.

The centre had an egg-stra special guest on Easter Saturday, in the form of the Easter Bunny himself, who distributed free Easter Eggs to Saddlers customers who spent money in the centre.

Children also had their face painted for free by one of the bunny's little helpers.

On the Day, the Easter Bunny handed a giant Easter Hamper to lucky shopper Natalie Jones who told us that she has been coming to the centre for several years and is delighted to have won such a fabulous prize.

Centre Manger Melvin Glasby said: "It is great to be able to continue to put these free family events on for our visitors, giving them another cracking reason to drop down to Saddlers Shopping Centre."

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Mystery of lost war film

Report by Toby Neal

TWISTING and turning in the skies, these biplanes were the stars of a movie created by some of the greatest talents of the golden age of cinema, bringing home the drama and heroism of an epic and largely forgotten aerial battle.

Based at a Shropshire airfield, the film crew overcame technical challenges and unexpected dangers – such as being fired at by friendly anti-aircraft artillery – to shoot spectacular aerial footage.

And almost 75 years later, one of those movie stars has made a return to Shropshire, looking as good as new. It is the Gloster Gladiator serial number K8042 – one of a number of biplanes that were used in the making of the movie *Signed With Their Honour*. It is a recent arrival at the RAF Museum at Cosford.

The film was based on a book of that name by Australian war correspondent James Aldridge, which told the story of the air war in Greece in 1941, when a handful of outdated Gloster Gladiators fought the might of the Luftwaffe in a six-week delaying action until the single British squadron was wiped out.

Operational

To take part in the movie, experienced RAF pilots were given a “rest holiday” after two or three years’ of continuous operational flying. Among them was a decorated Gladiator pilot who had been in the thick of the battle during the Greece campaign.

For taking to the skies above Shropshire to recreate the aerial conflict, they received no extra pay, the filming all being considered part of their rest cure.

What a fitting backdrop that footage would make for the Gladiator now on display at Cosford, having been moved there from the RAF Museum in London.

Alas, there is a great, unsolved mystery. For



“A mob of drinkers and real fellows” – that’s how Bordie captioned this picture at RAF Rednal



“Director Vernon Sewell tells us what to do – we just smile,” – Bordie, seen in the Tiger Moth’s rear seat



Movie star – the Gladiator on display at Cosford appeared in a 1943 movie filmed in Shropshire



Squadron Leader Richard Acworth, DFC, had previously flown Gladiators

after the aerial scenes were in the can, filming was cancelled indefinitely. The movie was never finished and nobody knows what happened to the footage that was shot by the team which had arrived at RAF Rednal, a Spitfire training base near Oswestry, in the autumn of 1943.

Maybe it lies undiscovered in some archive or private collection? Or maybe, and perhaps most probably, it was binned, and has been lost forever?

We can however bring you some rare images taken during the filming, which are in an

album which was compiled by the cameraman on the project, the late Osmond Borradaile.

“Bordie” was a renowned cinematographer who worked on films such as *The Four Feathers* and *Scott of the Antarctic*, and enhanced the work of the likes of Cecil B. De Mille, Alfred Hitchcock, and Otto Preminger. He has been described as “the greatest exterior camera artist in the world.”

A Canadian, his son George lives in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, and has kindly emailed us his father’s photographic souvenirs of that Shropshire shoot. It is conceivable that

they include a photo of K8042, the Gladiator now at Cosford, although with the serial number not visible in some shots, it is impossible to be sure.

Bordie also wrote memoirs – they were compiled into the book *Life Through A Lens* by his daughter Anita Hadley.

An ambitious project, to his deep disappointment it ultimately fell victim to the limited resources of the day, he wrote, and he did not know what had happened to the negatives.

Neither George nor Anita, who lives in British Columbia, can shed any more light on what

happened to the completed footage. The Air Ministry had given Denham Studios the green light to make the film and co-operated by providing facilities, including aircraft and pilots. Locations around Shrewsbury were selected, with studio models built at Denham.

The producer was Paul Soskin, the director was Vernon Sewell, and the cast of “resting” RAF pilots included Squadron Leader Richard Acworth, who had won the Distinguished Flying Cross and had taken part in the original air battle over Greece, and another DFC winner, Birmingham-born Flying Officer Tommy Tinsey, who had 52 pieces of shrapnel in his legs.

Bordie wrote in his memoirs: “A closely-knit group, the pilots became known as ‘Soskin’s Squadron’ after the producer, Paul Soskin.”

He went on: “Our pilots were a grand bunch of fellows. They had all flown at least two tours, and were assigned to us as a rest holiday. Some holiday all right!”

The exuberant pilots entered into the spirit of the production, and local townspeople must have wondered, said Bordie, about so many crash dives which left no trace of wreckage. The filming made headlines, and a story in the Daily Express of February 14, 1944, told how “in a market town in the wilds of north west England... country folk run from their cottages day after day to gaze up at the strangest series of aerial dogfights ever seen over Britain.” The town concerned was not mentioned because of censorship, but may well have been Oswestry.

A captured Messerschmitt was used as the “enemy.”

Bordie wrote: “It did not take long for me to come to the conclusion that this was a most difficult assignment because of all the restrictions imposed on us. We would all be briefed as to the shots we wished to obtain, and warned of the balloon barrage to our east, and told that the ack-ack guns would open up on us if we approached the land from the sea. Well, by the time we got through the clouds and tried to form up to get a shot, we often were over these restricted areas. It was not nice to be fired on by our own guns.”

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Cerys Nelmes from Wotton, who has starred in Trollied



Comedian Masai Graham from West Bromwich

Club rocks with laughter as star comics perform

THERE were laughs-a-plenty at a new Black Country entertainment venue as a touring comedy club left crowds in hysterics.

Can Comedy Club hosted its latest gig at the former landmark Wednesbury Conservative Club – now known as Churchill's Bar and Restaurant.

BBC Mock The Week panellist Nathan Caton was joined by fellow comics Andy Robinson, Masai Graham and star of Sky One's Trollied, Cerys Nelmes, who took turns in performing on stage.

Organisers from Can Comedy said they were 'overwhelmed' by how well the show went.

Andrew Nightingale, aged 34 from Wednesbury, who runs the company with his brother Paul, 29, said: "The gig was really good. We expected 40 to 50 people to turn up but the room was filled." The night was rounded off by Nathan who left the audience in 'stitches' after landing a well-delivered joke, said Andrew.

"We started off around 8.30pm and finished off just after 11," he said. "Nathan did a half hour performance at the end to close the gig. The audience was in stitches. I think he was hoping he could land his punch line, and once he delivered it the audience loved it." It comes as the venue was transformed following the closure of Wednesbury Conservative and Unionist Club in January last year after more than 140 years.

Enjoyed

Paul, who is a father-of-two and is a computer science teacher at South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy, has been running Can Comedy Club for the last five years with his brother.

Although they both have taken to the stage as stand-up comedians themselves, they have enjoyed the management side of running the club.

The show at the Walsall Street venue on Saturday, April 15, was the latest event run by Can Comedy in Wednesbury.

On April 1, they held a gig at The Lamp Restaurant, which was headlined by Joe Lyett.

The next show taking place at Churchill's will be on June 10. Tickets can be bought for £10.45 by visiting www.wegottickets.com and searching for 'Can Comedy @ Churchill's'.

Andrew said it was great to be able to bring high-profile comic acts to Wednesbury, saving people having to travel to venues in the likes of Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

Masai came to prominence after winning last year's Funniest Joke of the Edinburgh Fringe Award. The comedian, who calls himself "General Punochet", was previously named the UK's "Pun Champion" after winning a tournament hosted by Lee Nelson at the Leicester Comedy Festival. The winning joke was: "My dad has suggested that I register for a donor card. He's a man after my own heart."



Paul Coates from Yew Tree estate has fun during the show



Television regular, Nathan Caton, from London, seen in performance



Nathan Caton, Masai Graham, and brothers Paul and Andy Nightingale



Inside Churchill's, the venue once known as Wednesbury Conservative Club

Let's hang on to the vintage Valli

REVIEW

Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Genting Arena, Birmingham

THERE is a scene towards the end of Jersey Boys – the musical about Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons – where the lead character says: "Like that bunny with the batteries I just keep going and going and going."

And so it comes to pass as the real Frankie Valli is still performing in his 83rd year.

He doesn't bound about on stage like the Duracell rabbit, at his age you wouldn't expect him to. But, Oh what a night!

Valli cannot hit the high notes like he used to, but he was given an early chance to show off the falsetto with which he made his name as Dawn came four songs in.

Video

Of course, Jersey Boys brings to light songs that are not readily associated with Valli, like Stay, Bye Bye Baby, Can't Take My Eyes Off You and Silence Is Golden and all featured here, the latter with help from two of his Four Seasons' backing singers.

There were times, however, when it appeared he had too much helium intake.

After promising Birmingham he would have even more fun than the last time he was there, the concert began with a historical video montage and ended with pretty much everyone on their feet. There were young and old in the audience, too, indicative of the impact his music has had over the years.



Even in his 83rd year Frankie Valli just loves to perform

And we had a great view of proceedings looking straight ahead towards the stage.

My Eyes Adored You had the glow sticks out early on in front of us. There was also a Frank Sinatra tribute with Under My Skin and a medley of 60s material with Spanish Harlem, My Girl and Groovin'.

Beggin' and Grease were among the big hits that followed before the aforementioned Can't Take My Eyes Off

You had everyone up and the finish came with the four big number ones, namely Sherry, Walk Like A Man, Big Girls Don't Cry and Rag Doll with Let's Hang On to finish.

Valli may be going strong at the age of 82, but you know he won't last forever.

In the meantime, let's hang on to the pleasure he has given his millions of adoring fans in the last six decades.

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Good things come in small packages

He describes himself as an old man who wants to complain about the world but offer no solutions. Jon Richardson is the archetypal Grumpy Old Man – who is both grumpy and old before his time.

And the quietly sophisticated comedian will thrill fans when he headlines Birmingham's Hippodrome on Thursday as part of a national tour.

The show follows on from his recent TV hit, How to Survive the End of the World, for Channel 4, which was screened earlier this year.

He says: "The show was basically a small terrified man and his (would you believe it) even smaller and sometimes more terrified wife making a list of the things that they're scared might kill them, and then me going out and looking into them one by one, in the hope that I can come home and tell her, 'D'you know what, actually these are all irrational fears. We don't need to worry about any of them, and we can get on with our lives as normal'.

Jon was supposed to investigate major dangers, such as terrorism, but digressed into looking at the state of sausages and air pollution.

"I think I'm quite small, I don't think that helps. I feel quite small in a lot of ways. And I also think I'm right – we're all going to die of something, and there's just a lot of awful stuff in the world. I know that's not a particularly upbeat message, particularly coming from a comedian, but that's all that life is, really: Dealing with horrific stuff and trying to make it funny," he says.

DEMEANOUR

"I think it's more that it impacts on my demeanour. We've had a couple of incidents where we haven't done things as a family: We'll avoid built-up areas, so there's times when we actually have changed events. But it's more that sort of constant fear of things just stops you being the person you'd like to be. I don't know if this has come across in our dealings so far, but I wouldn't say I'm a particularly sparkling, upbeat person to talk to. I need all the help I can get, so if I could at least not have that voice in the back of my head that's always telling me to look left and look right and look up, and breathe through my nose and not through my mouth, so it's double-filtered, and all those silly things, maybe I'd be a better person if I could live more in the moment."

Jon's wife is also a worrier and they often end up freaking one another out, rather than winding each other up. There are times when it might be easier for both of them to simply go and see a psychiatrist.

"It would, but that would be a selfish route to my goal! It would sort me out, but I am in the role of giving to the wider community, and that's why I'm willing to film my investigations and put them on telly. You will see a genuine upsurge in the wellbeing of Britain. I would say, in the 2-3 weeks after this, there will be an immediate spike. And then in the six to 12 months afterwards we'll start to see the economic benefit of my work."

Jon found a number of weird scenarios in his new TV show. The strangest was meeting a man called Troy in Canada.

"What you often find with these documentaries is that everyone you meet could easily have a documentary all to themselves. People's lives are fascinating, and this documentary was certainly like that. Every issue we looked into, you could have spent not just one documentary, but a series looking into it. As for Troy – there should be some Kardashians or Osbornes-style documentary. For a start there should be a webcam on him all the time, just so that we

Young fogey – Jon's old and grumpy before his time



I wouldn't say I'm a particularly sparkling, upbeat person to talk to

can tune in and watch him for a bit. He gave us so much footage. He's not just invented an anti-bear suit.

"He's invented what he thinks is an improved Kevlar. It's a lighter-weight, more flexible, bullet and bomb-proof outfit for the army, which he's just made himself in his garage. He's created chemical which he says if you drop it in an ocean, it'll separate the oil from the water, so that you can clear up the oil from an oil spill in minutes rather than weeks.

"He's invented his own laser, which he points at his own head daily, to regenerate hair growth. He's one of the most intriguing people I've met in my life. We filmed with him in the bear suit, testing it by driving through a brick wall. The hours in his laboratory were so intense. We could have just aired that unedited. And there's a genuine possibility that he's invented something that could change the world, and no-one's listening to him. Because he sounds so intense, you end up just shuffling out of the room, because he's just terrifying to be with. But undoubtedly he was the most intriguing, and if I was more of a Louis Theroux type, I'd definitely go back and do a full week with him."

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Sheridan Smith in Funny Girl



Funny Girl Sheridan is ready for her star turn

THE West End's brightest star, Sheridan Smith, is coming to Birmingham Hippodrome to reprise her role as Fanny Brice following record-breaking success in hit musical Funny Girl in London.

Funny Girl brought global fame to Barbra Streisand 50 years ago, on Broadway, in the West End and then as a movie musical, and boasts such iconic songs as People and Don't Rain On My Parade.

It tells the story of Fanny Brice who went from burlesque to Broadway, becoming one of America's biggest stage and radio stars of the 1920s and 30s.

Michael Mayer's revamp of the 1964 show features revisions by Harvey Fierstein of Isobel Lennart's original book, and of course retains the songs by Julie Styne and Bob Merrill.

Sheridan Smith won an Olivier Award for her starring role in Legally Blonde at the Savoy Theatre, and an Olivier for her dramatic role in Flare Path at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. In television she won a Bafta for her role in Mrs Biggs and praise for playing Cilla, after originally catching the eye in Gavin & Stacey and Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps.

Funny Girl is at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday to Saturday, May 8-13. For tickets visit www.birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000.

Funny Girl will visit Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from July 24 to 29 with Natasha J Barnes as Brice. She got excellent reviews when sharing the role with Smith in the West End. The male lead role of Nick Arnstein will be played by Chris Peluso in Birmingham and by Darius Campbell in Wolverhampton. Campbell is now a major stage star after pop hits as Darius.

Rich pickings with American grouch



Rich Hall is rightly regarded as one of the funniest comedians to come out of the US in recent times.

And, as he is based in the UK most of the time, this country has, over the past three decades, had the benefit from his grouchy sense of humour.

Now we are about to enjoy more of his crotchety comedy, as he is on a nationwide tour with his new show Hoedown, coming to Stourbridge Town Hall on May 19 and Stafford Gatehouse on May 26.

The comedian, who has won both a Perrier (Edinburgh Comedy Festival) and a Barry (Melbourne International Comedy Festival) Award, is surely the funniest

curmudgeon in The West (with apologies to Jack Dee and Romesh Ranganathan).

Rich's straight-talking and acerbic comedy leaves his targets reeling and his audiences in stitches. He sends up whichever country he is in, but perhaps reserves his most trenchant scorn for his native USA, and since the arrival of President Trump, he's got that to aim at.

Rich, who has presented such BBC 4 documentaries as Rich Hall's Inventing the Indian and Rich Hall's Presidential Grudge Match, says he is excited to be performing live once again.

"I love the fact that when a live show is over, it's gone. It's happened, and it will never

happen like that again. It can't be replicated. That's a great magical moment," he says

"In every single show, there are always two or three moments where I'm thinking, 'Wow, where did that come from? You're constantly thinking on your feet.'

One of the features of Rich's act is that he goes out of his way to find out about the town he is playing in and then improvise a song about it. "I try to tap into what is happening locally and address that musically.

"I like to do something custom-made every night. Once they realise you're not just trotting out your regular act, people think, 'He's made a real effort. He's on our side, so we're on his side.' Then you can take them anywhere."

Magical circus tale hits The Road



One of the masterpieces of cinema, Federico Fellini's 1957 Oscar-winner, La Strada (The Road), is brought to the stage in a new adaptation at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from May 8 to 13 as part of a UK tour.

La Strada tells the tender tale of wide-eyed Gelsomina (Audrey Brisson, pictured) who is sold to the brutish circus强人Zampano but Il Matto, the tightrope walker, tries to rekindle her broken spirit. Visit birmingham-rep.co.uk or call the box office on 0121 236 4455.

Quality of Mersey sound at Sunflower

Psychedelic pop with a Scouse flavour will be heard in Birmingham city centre when The Sundowners and Edgar Jones & The New Joneses join forces at the Sunflower Lounge on Thursday, May 4. Both bands have new albums out on Liverpool label Skeleton Key Records. As a teenager Jones was in a band with Merseyside legend Ian McCulloch of Echo & The Bunnymen – who has his own gig at Bistro's Robin 2 on May 9 – before forming cult outfit The Stairs, and working with Paul Weller and Johnny Marr. The sunnily sounding Sundowners feature the vocals of Niamh Rowe and Fiona Skelly. Fiona and Alfie Skelly, on lead guitar, are siblings to The Coral's Skelly brothers. Birmingham band Cut Glass Kings will support at the Smallbrook Queensway venue.

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Tom Davis

Murder in Successville (BBC1, 11.25pm)

Originality – it's a rare thing these days. Programmes come and go, but if one happens to be a major success, other companies come along and try to replicate it with a twist on the same format. Sometimes it works, but more often than not, it falls by the wayside – not that such a thing stops anybody else having a go. So when something that is truly new comes along, we should all sit up and take notice – and doff our caps at its creators. Murder in Successville certainly falls into the 'original' category, which means the brains behind it, Avril Spary and Andy Brereton, need to stand up and take a bow. Tom Davis heads the cast as DI Sleet, a hapless yet lovable detective, and he's thrilled to be back in action.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites. **(R) 12.00** Football Focus, **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The opening semi-final is set to reach a conclusion. **4.30** Final Score, **5.30** Who Dares Wins. **6.10** BBC News. **6.20** Regional Programme. **6.30** Pointless Celebrities, Jimmy Osmond, Kym Mazzelle, Jedward, Nancy Lam, Sam Simmons, Ossie Ardiles and Guillermo Balaguer compete in an internationally themed edition of the unorthodox quiz show. **7.20** Doctor Who, Doctor and Bill visit Regency London to attend the last of the great frost fairs, but get wrapped up in a mystery when a sinister force stirs beneath the ice of the frozen Thames. **8.10** Casualty. Part two of two, Roy Edison's relatives cause chaos in the ED, and Lily is rushed into the ward after being found unconscious in the car park. **9.00** BBC News; Weather. **9.10** All Round to Mrs Brown's. Agnes invites one last selection of celebrities into her home, as her Saturday night chat show continues. **9.30** The actor, singer and West End star Michael Ball pulls up a chair in Mrs Brown's sitting room, along with actress and one-time Strictly Come Dancing contestant Sunetra Sarker. **Most Haunted** presenter Yvette Fielding lends her ghost-hunting skills to Dermot and Buster during their **Celebrity Haunted House** tour; National Lottery Update. **10.20** Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Southampton v Hull City at St Mary's Stadium and Crystal Palace v Burnley at Selhurst Park. **11.25** Murder in Successville. Guest rookie Martin Kemp goes back in time to solve the very first murder in Victorian Successville, that of lady-of-the-night Rita Ora, Comedy, starring Tom Davis. **11.55** Film: Wild Hogs. (2007) Four middle-aged suburban friends try to rev up their lives on a cross-country motorbike trip. Comedy adventure, with John Travolta, William H Macy, Tim Allen and Martin Lawrence. **1.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.25 Film: On Moonlight Bay. (1951) **6.30** Film: That's Entertainment Part Two. (1976) **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.00** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.30** Hart Beams' Bedtime Stories. (R) **1.15** 60s Iconic Talking Pictures. **1.45** Film: The Icress File. (1965) Spy thrillers starring Michael Caine. **3.30** Natural World. (R) **4.30** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The opening semi-final is set to reach a conclusion. **5.30** The Crucible: 40 Golden Snooker Years. (R) **6.30** Dad's Army, HQ discover that Mainwaring is not a commissioned officer and he is ordered to join the ranks as a private. Sergeant Wilson is put in temporary charge, but his lack of leadership skills during a training exercise leaves the platoon yearning for the captain's reinstatement. Comedy first aired in 1969, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R) **7.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship, Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the fourth and final session of the second semi-final at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first player to reach 17 frames will progress to the final. This match produced a thriller last year between Mark Selby and Marco Fu, with Selby prevailing 17-15 in a high-quality encounter to reach his third world final, where he would face qualifier Ding Junhui. **9.30** Film: Calvary. (2014) Premiere. A priest in rural Ireland receives a confession from a man who vows to kill him in one week as punishment for the Catholic Church's history of child abuse. The cleric spends his last seven days trying to put his community's affairs in order, but finds himself surrounded by people who harbour resentments of their own against the Church. Drama, starring Brendan Gleeson, Chris O'Dowd, Kelly Reilly, Aidan Gillen and Dylan Moran. **11.05** Versailles. The King's bad example is seen as typical of the nobility's immorality as his adultery with Madame de Montespan not only troubles his Queen but also causes young Father Pascal; (R) Inside Versailles. **12.05** Film: Rabbit-Proof Fence. (2002) **1.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **7.00** 12.30 The Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.55** Ninja Go: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Home Game. (R) **10.20** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **11.20** Tipping Point. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.30** Bigheads. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Sandown. Coverage of today's race meetings at Sandown Park and Haydock Park. **4.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R) **4.30** Britain's Got More Talent. **5.30** Catchphrase. (R) **6.15** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.45** Take Me Out. Paddy McGuinness presents as Croydon bartender Tommy, prison officer Luke from Swansea, Essex-based salesman Bayo, and travel consultant Rixxy from Leeds enters the "love lift". All four hope to impress 30 single women and win a date – but must first get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval. **8.00** Britain's Got Talent. The audition stage reaches its third week, as judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Williams and Alesha Dixon continue to travel the length and breadth of the nation in search of potential stars to demonstrate their unique talents on-stage. This year, the judges already seem to be eager to place their stamp on performers, as the usually reticent Simon hit his Golden Buzzer during the very first set of auditions. **9.20** Through the Keyhole. Keith Lemon visits mystery celebrity homes and challenges this week's panel – Kimberley Walsh, Jonathan Ross and Andi Peters – to guess the identities of the famous owners. (R) **10.15** ITV News: Weather. **10.35** Film: Yes Man. (2008) A downtrodden man has his life transformed when he decides to say yes to every opportunity. Comedy based on the book by Danny Wallace, starring Jim Carrey and Zooey Deschanel. **12.25** Jackpot247. **3.00** What's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **1.30** This Is BBC Two.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **6.35** Volkswagen Racing Cup. **7.00** The King of Queens. (R) **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Frasier. (R) **8.50** Frasier. (R) **9.25** The 25th Anniversary of the Russian Grand Prix Practice at Live. **11.25** F1 Meets Daniel Ricciardo. **11.55** Formula 1 Russian Grand Prix Qualifying Live. **2.30** The Auctioneers. **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House. Little House. **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** The Restoration Man. Architect George Clarke returns to catch up with London couple Justin Hooper and Charlotte Seddon, who first appeared in the show's third series, planning to transform a derelict wartime airfield control tower in Scotland into a new family home. Four years later, George finds out how the pair's ambitious venture fared, as they struggled to project-manage the site from 600 miles away. With costs spiralling out of control, Justin and Charlotte faced a difficult decision: shut down the build, or make a complete lifestyle change by relocating their family to the site. **8.00** Walking Through Time. Palaeobiologist Dr Tori Herridge follows up her documentary on the mega-flood that separated Britain from continental Europe with three more investigations, all of which explore some of the prehistoric forces that shaped the national landscape. She begins by visiting north-west Scotland, where the craggy coastline indicates an asteroid landed 1.2 billion years ago. (R) **9.00** Film: Carol. (2015) Premiere. A housewife trapped in a loveless marriage in 1950s New York forms a close attachment with a younger woman seeking fulfilment in her own life. Romantic drama based on Patricia Highsmith's novel The Price of Salt, starring Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara. **11.20** Film: Zombieland. (2009) A small group of survivors goes in search of a safe haven in an America overrun by ravenous zombies. Comedy horror, starring Woody Harrelson, Jesse Eisenberg and Emma Stone. **1.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.50** Hollyoaks. (R) **3.55** Shipping Wars UK. (R) **4.20** Fifteen to One. (R) **5.15** Location, Location, Location. (R) **10.00** Football on 5: Cool Push. George Riley and Lynsey Hippgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in League Two, including Hartlepool United v Barnet and Carlisle United v Newport County. **10.15** Film: Tower Block. (2012) The residents of a soon-to-be-demolished tower block are trapped while a mysterious sniper picks them off one by one. Thriller, starring Sheridan Smith and Jack O'Connell. **12.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Film: The Long Ships. (1963) **5.15** House Doctor. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roar the Racing Car. (R) **1.30** Take Me Out 2.45. In West London, agents Max and Cona chase up more than £2,000 in unpaid parking fines, but when they try to seize a vehicle, the debtor ties it to a tree. Meanwhile in Lancashire, officers Stewart and Elmor try to collect £4,000 owed for unpaid nursery fees. (R) **7.05** NCIS: Los Angeles. The team investigates the death of a Navy intelligence officer, and the choice of murder weapon leads the agents to believe he was killed by a colleague. However, while former Seal Sam threatens to compromise the integrity of the case, evidence suggests the victim may have been selling secrets to the enemy. **8.00** NCIS. The team must track a traumatised serviceman to recall the events of an ambush he survived while serving in Iraq, after a American couple are attacked in the very same spot. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Football on 5: The Championship. Action from the penultimate round of regular-season fixtures in the Championship, featuring Brighton & Hove, Bristol City, Birmingham, Derby County, Ipswich Town v Sheffield Wednesday at Portman Road. **10.00** Football on 5: Cool Push. George Riley and Lynsey Hippgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in League Two, including Hartlepool United v Barnet and Carlisle United v Newport County. **10.15** Film: Tower Block. (2012) The residents of a soon-to-be-demolished tower block are trapped while a mysterious sniper picks them off one by one. Thriller, starring Sheridan Smith and Jack O'Connell. **11.00** Courage Mountain (1990) **1.00** The Borrows (1997) **2.25** The Big Rurats Movie (1999) **4.20** One Fine Day (1996) **6.35** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) **9.00** Bad Neighbours (2014) **10.50** Willow Creek (2013) **12.25** Troll Hunter (2010) **2.30** Rec 3: Genesis (2012) **4.00** Close

SATURDAY'S TV APRIL 29

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Dan Cruickshank: At Home with the British **8.00** The BBC at War **9.00** Film: Pioneer (2013) **10.45** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.05** Sinatra: All or Nothing at All **2.05** Duets: The Andy Williams Show **3.05** Sounds of the Sixties **3.35** Close

ITV2

11.00 Britain's Got Talent **12.25** Britain's Got Talent **1.30** Take Me Out **2.45** Take Me Out – The Gossip **3.50** You've Been Framed! **4.20** Film: Flubber (1997) **5.10** Film: The Incredible Hulk (2008) **7.10** Film Daily **7.15** Film: The Incredible Hulk (2008) **8.20** Scorpion **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.25** Celebrity Juice **11.25** Family Guy **12.50** American Dad! **2.10** Through the Keyhole **3.30** Teleshopping

ITV3

12.55 Margery and Gladys **3.00** Lewis **4.45** Rosemary & Thyme **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Foyle's War **11.05** Law & Order: UK **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

12.45 Counting Cars **1.40** Football Rivalries **2.00** Cycling: Tour de Yorkshire Live. Coverage of the second stage. **3.15** Football Rivalries **5.30** Storage Wars: Texas **5.55** Fierce 7.00 Cycling: Tour de Yorkshire **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Film: The Devil's Advocate (1997) **10.00** Film: The Devil's Advocate (1997) **11.55** Film: The Devil's Advocate (1997) **12.55** Film: Don't Say a Word (2001) **2.10** Cash Cowboys **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.30 Film: Hop (2011) **2.30** Film: Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010) **4.50** Rock(n) Roll Shorts **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Safe House (2012). A CIA agent has to protect a captured fugitive from mercenaries, but also has to resist his prisoner's mind games. Thriller, with Denzel Washington and Ryan Reynolds. **11.15** Googlebox. Viewers' opinions on The Island with Bear Grylls and The Eurovision Song Contest. **1.25** Rude Tube **2.30** Tattoo Fixers **3.20** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **4.45** New Girl **5.00** Film 4

11.00 Courage Mountain (1990) **1.00** The Borrows (1997) **2.25** The Big Rurats Movie (1999) **4.20** One Fine Day (1996) **6.35** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) **9.00** Bad Neighbours (2014) **10.50** Willow Creek (2013) **12.25** Troll Hunter (2010) **2.30** Rec 3: Genesis (2012) **4.00** Close

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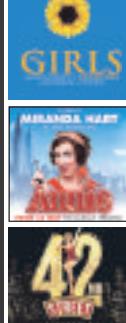
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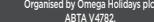
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Your Chronicle in association with Omega ABTA The Travel Association

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **7.00** 12.30 The Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.55** Ninja Go: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Home Game. (R) **10.20** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **11.20** Tipping Point. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.30** Bigheads. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Sandown. Coverage of today's race meetings at Sandown Park and Haydock Park. **4.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R) **4.30** Britain's Got More Talent. **5.30** Catchphrase. (R) **6.15** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.45** Take Me Out. Paddy McGuinness presents as Croydon bartender Tommy, prison officer Luke from Swansea, Essex-based salesman Bayo, and travel consultant Rixxy from Leeds enters the "love lift". All four hope to impress 30 single women and win a date – but must first get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval. **8.00** Britain's Got Talent. The audition stage reaches its third week, as judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Williams and Alesha Dixon continue to travel the length and breadth of the nation in search of potential stars to demonstrate their unique talents on-stage. This year, the judges already seem to be eager to place their stamp on performers, as the usually reticent Simon hit his Golden Buzzer during the very first set of auditions. **9.20** Through the Keyhole. Keith Lemon visits mystery celebrity homes and challenges this week's panel – Kimberley Walsh, Jonathan Ross and Andi Peters – to guess the identities of the famous owners. (R) **10.15** ITV News: Weather. **10.35** Film: Yes Man. (2008) A downtrodden man has his life transformed when he decides to say yes to every opportunity. Comedy based on the book by Danny Wallace, starring Jim Carrey and Zooey Deschanel. **12.25** Jackpot247. **3.00** What's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **1.30** This Is BBC Two.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.50** Access. **10.55** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **11.20** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.15** The Gadget Show. (R) **1.15** 12.30 NCIS: All or Nothing at All **2.05** Duets: The Andy Williams Show **3.05** Sounds of the Eighties **3.35** Close

ITV2

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ITV5

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Your Chronicle in association with

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SUNDAY'S TV APRIL 30

CHOICE



Keeley Hawes

Line of Duty (BBC1, 9pm)

It's the time when the likes of Call the Midwife, Heartbeat, Where the Heart Is and other such rose-tinted shows have been broadcast, and The Durrells now falls firmly into that bracket. Simon Nye of Men Behaving Badly fame, is behind this hit revival on ITV. "I've written TV series that were greeted by bafflement, critical vitriol or – worst of all – nothing more than the rustle of tumbleweed," he reveals. "Thank you therefore to everyone, on both sides of the Atlantic, who responded so warmly to the first series of The Durrells last year" This week, Larry is overjoyed at the prospect of his first novel being published back home in England; it's a shame that nobody else seems as thrilled.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.50** Match of the Day, (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show, **10.00** The Big Questions, **11.00** Regional Programme, **12.15** Bargain Hunt, (R) 1.00 BBC News; Weather, **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer, (R) 2.15 Wanted Down Under, **3.15** Fog It!, **4.05** Points of View, **4.20** Escape to the Country, (R) **5.05** Songs of Praise, **5.40** Pointless Celebrities, (R) **6.30** BBC News.

6.50 Regional Programme.

7.00 Countryfile, Ellie Harrison visits Warwickshire for Hedgehog Awareness Week, and meets three girls who have set up a rehab centre for the animals. Steve Brown meets local volunteers trying to protect wildfowl along the river Tame and its floodplain, and John Craven visits a nature reserve that doubts as a burial ground. Adam Henson meets a farming family in Cumbria and Tom Heap explores Scotland's salmon industry.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. The roving team values more decorative objects and rarities belonging to the public.

9.00 Line of Duty. Nick faces lengthy questioning before being charged with Tim's murder. The AC-12 team is convinced Roz was also involved, but with Hastings coming under pressure from Hilton, the detectives are running out of time to prove their theory, and are forced to risk everything to bring the guilty parties to justice. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2, Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, which featured Tottenham Hotspur v Arsenal, Everton v Chelsea, Manchester United v Swansea City and Middlesbrough v Manchester City. Spurs finally seem destined to finish above their north London rivals, and victory would be even sweeter as it would harm the Gunners' chances of a top-four finish.

11.50 The Women's Football Show. Eilidh Barbour presents action from the latest FA WSL Spring Series fixtures, including Sunderland v Arsenal.

12.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 A to Z of TV Gardening, (R) **7.15** Around the World in 80 Gardens, (R) **8.50** Countryfile, (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites, **11.15** Nigel Shatto: Building Together, (R) **11.45** Animal Ball, (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra, **1.00** Athletics: World Relay Championship Highlights, **2.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the opening session of the final at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first eight frames of the match are scheduled to take place.

6.00 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby, Giles Coren and Monica Galetti join the staff working in some of the most unusual hotels around the world, learning the tricks of the trade, (R) **7.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. Hazel Irvine presents all the action from the second session of the final at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre, where a further nine frames are scheduled to take place. The second session of last year's final saw Ding Junhui stage a fightback to trail Mark Selby by just one frame, 7-8, before the selector from Leicester recovered to end the day with a 10-7 lead. The commentary team features five former world champions in Dennis Taylor, Steve Davis, John Parrott, Ken Doherty and Stephen Hendry, along with Willie Thorne and John Virgo.

11.00 Film: Drive, (2011) A stuntman who moonlights as a getaway driver tries to protect the wife and child of an imprisoned criminal. When the convict is released, the driver tries to convince him to give up his life of crime for his family's sake, but when they work together on a robbery, they end up drawn into a conflict with the Mafia. Crime drama, with Ryan Gosling, Carey Mulligan and Bryan Cranston.

12.35 Sign Change: Question Time. David Dimbleby hosts the debate from Oxford, with a panel of politicians and other guests facing topical questions from the audience, (R) **1.35** Hob City. After uncovering a revelation from Matteo's past, he and Jac clash over a patient. Meanwhile, Sacha is not himself, but how long will he be able to keep Essie off the scent? Elsewhere, Ric cracks the whip on the Acute Assessment Unit floor, but a surprise visitor soon throws him off his game. (R) **2.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street, **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street, (R) **6.25** Sooty, (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story, (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures, (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures, (R) **7.00** Quiddiboids, (R) **7.15** Marvel Superhero Assembly, (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go, (R) **7.55** NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu, (R) **8.00** ITV News, **8.30** Weekend, **9.25** Countrywise: Guide to Britain, (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday, **11.00** Judge Rinder, (R) **12.00** ITV News; Weather, **12.05** Fishing Impossible, (R) **12.35** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **1.35** Tipping Point, (R) **2.40** Britain's Got Talent, (R) **4.00** Film: On Her Majesty's Secret Service, (1969) James Bond adventure, starring George Lazenby.

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather, **6.45** ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Bighorse: Jason Manford hosts the comedy game show in which members of the public compete in a series of bizarre physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of David Beckham, Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, Prince Charles and Queen Victoria. They must dodge past giant bouncers to get into a nightclub, fight over microphones to record a single, and get away before the paparazzi see them. With commentary from Jenny Powell and Kriss Akabusi.

8.00 The Durrells. Larry's latest novel is being published – but nobody seems to be impressed. Leslie has an idea for a new business venture involving making liquor out of kumquats.

9.00 Grantchester. The villagers play a cricket match against nearby Whittleford, but after an incident involving contaminated beer, one batsman is found poisoned. Guest starring Peter Davison.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Lethal Weapon. The festive holiday season weighs heavily on Riggs, who flashes back to past Christmases with his late wife Miranda, Clayne Crawford stars, (R) **11.20** Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights of the latest top-flight fixtures, which included Harlequins v Wasps, Bath v Gloucester and Exeter Chiefs v Northampton Saints.

12.15 Peston on Sunday, (R) **1.10** Jackpot247, **3.00** Motorsport UK, **3.55** The Cube, (R) **4.40** ITV Nightscreen, **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show, (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens, (R) **6.35** The King of Queens, (R) **7.00** Everybody Loves Raymond, (R) **7.25** Frasier, (R) **8.25** Frasier, (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch, **12.00** Formula 1: F1 Grand Prix of Mexico, (R) **7.25** Black and the Mortal Machine, **7.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective, (R) **8.10** Whisper, (R) **8.20** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, (R) **8.55** Football on 5: The Championship, (R) **9.45** Football on 5: Goal Rush, (R) **10.00** Great Birmingham 10k, Live coverage of the race, **12.00** Film: Getting Even with Dad, (1994) Family comedy, starring Macaulay Culkin and Ted Danson, **2.00** Film: Three Men and a Little Lady, (1990) Comedy sequel, starring Tom Selleck, **4.00** Film: HouseSitter, (1992) Romantic comedy, starring Steve Martin and Goldie Hawn.

6.05 George Clarke's Old House, New Home, George visits a Grade-II listed worker's cottage in Hampshire, as his mission to future-proof historic houses continues. Due to restrictions on planning permissions, the property has become somewhat disorganized, and is in need of a careful makeover, seeking inspiration, George tours a Victorian stable that was renovated to add a gym, cinema and roof garden, (R) **7.00** Escape to Costa Rica, New series. Science writer Gai Vince explores the island, which is the most sustainable nation in the world, home to over 500,000 species of animal and with a national grid run on rivers and volcanoes that is due to be completely carbon neutral by 2021. She meets the republic's president, environmentalists and joins a team of scientists helping to preserve the island's forest and wildlife.

8.00 Film: Transformers: Dark of the Moon, (2011) The heroic autobots discover that a spaceship from their own planet crashed into the moon decades ago, carrying their former leader and an incredibly powerful device. They must fight to defend the human race as their enemies the decepticons plot to use this machine to rebuild their own world and destroy the Earth. Sci-fi adventure sequel, with Shia LaBeouf, Josh Duhamel and Rosie Huntington-Whiteley.

11.00 Gogglebox, Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas, (R) **12.05** Film: Mud, (2012) **2.25** KOTV Boxing Weekly, **2.50** Gillette World Sport, **3.15** Shipping Wars UK, (R) **3.40** Building the Dream, **4.35** Location, Location, Location, (R) **5.30** Four in a Bed, (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig, **6.05** Peppa Pig, (R) **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey, (R) **6.15** Paw Patrol, (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder, (R) **6.40** Fireman Sam, (R) **6.50** Oily, the Little White Van, **7.00** Oily the Little White Van, (R) **7.15** Paw Patrol, (R) **7.25** Black and the Mortal Machine, **7.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective, (R) **8.10** Whisper, (R) **8.20** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, (R) **8.55** Football on 5: The Championship, (R) **9.45** Football on 5: Goal Rush, (R) **10.00** Great Birmingham 10k, Live coverage of the race, **12.00** Film: Getting Even with Dad, (1994) Family comedy, starring Macaulay Culkin and Ted Danson, **2.00** Film: Three Men and a Little Lady, (1990) Comedy sequel, starring Tom Selleck, **4.00** Film: HouseSitter, (1992) Romantic comedy, starring Steve Martin and Goldie Hawn.

6.00 Film: Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, (1991) An English nobleman returns home from the crusades to find his father has been murdered and the local people are repressed by the tyrannical rule of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Branded an outlaw, he recruits a group of bandits to fight for justice and protect the downtrodden. Action adventure, starring Kevin Costner, Alan Rickman, Morgan Freeman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio. Edited for daytime broadcast.

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 Greatest Ever 90s Movies. Patsy Kensit presents a countdown of some of the most memorable films from the last decade of the 20th century, including Titanic and Trainspotting, (R) **11.50** Football on 5: Goal Rush. Action from the final fixtures of the regular season in League One, including Southampton v Millwall and Millwall v Fleetwood Town.

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 The Birth of British Music **8.00** The Secret Life of the Motorway **9.00** Horizon: Dancing in the Dark – The End of Physics? **10.00** Trump's First 100 Days **11.00** Being Eve: Kneivel: Storyville **12.30** The BBC at War **1.30** Metamorphosis – The Science of Change **2.30** Horizon: Dancing in the Dark – The End of Physics? **3.30** Close

ITV2

11.25 Take Me Out **12.40** Catchphrase **1.20** You've Been Framed! Goes Wild! **2.25** Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **4.15** Britain's Got Talent **5.40** Britain's Got More Talent **6.45** Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **9.00** Film: Get Out – The Gossip **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.25** The Vampire Diaries **2.10** Reur East: The Hot Deck **2.25** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.40 Film: Forever Young (1992) **12.40** Film: Forever Young (1992) **1.40** A Touch of Frost **3.50** Film: Frost's War **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Royal Stories **9.00** Prince Harry in Africa **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Wire in the Blood **2.00** Lewis **3.40** May: The Best House Win **5.20** In Loving Memory **5.45** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

11.25 Cycling **12.00** Cycling: Tour de Yorkshire Live. The third and final stage. **5.30** Pawn Stars **5.55** The Chase Celebrity Special **7.00** Cycling: Tour de Yorkshire **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Car Wars **10.05** Film: Beetlejuice (1988) **12.00** River Monsters **2.05** Fifth Gear **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

E4

11.00 The Goldbergs **12.30** Black-ish **1.00** Baby Daddy **1.30** Kevin Can Wait **2.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** New Girl **3.00** Film: The Net (1995) **5.15** Rude(sch) Tube Shorts **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.05** E4's Tattoo Artist of the Year **1.05** Celebrity First Dates **2.10** Naked Attraction **3.05** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.50** Hollyoaks **5.45**

ITV

11.00 Hercules (1983) **1.00** Song of the Sea (2014) **2.50** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **4.30** Short Circuit (1986) **6.35** Mrs Doubtfire (1993) **9.00** Now You See Me (2013) **11.15** The Taking of Pelham 123 (2009) **1.20** The Player (1992) **3.55** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Saving Mr Banks, BBC1, 8.30pm

Walt Disney becomes determined to adapt Mary Poppins into a film, but faces an obstacle in the shape of author PL Travers, who resists the idea of a sentimental Hollywood version of her book. Fact-based drama, with Emma Thompson, Tom Hanks, Paul Giamatti and Colin Farrell. (2013)

TUESDAY

A Walk Among the Tombstones, Channel 5, 9pm

An ex cop working as an unlicensed private eye is hired by a drug trafficker to find the men who murdered his wife. Crime thriller based on Lawrence Block's novel, starring Liam Neeson. (2014)

WEDNESDAY

The Bling Ring, Channel 4, 1.55am

Five teenagers united by an obsession with celebrity steal from the houses of the rich and famous stars they idolise, using the internet to follow their targets' movements. When the police finally catch up with them, the arrest brings a taste of the fame they have craved. Fact-based drama, starring Emma Watson and Isla Brouard. (2013)



Saving Mr Banks, Monday, BBC1, 8.30pm

FRIDAY

It's Complicated, Channel 5, 10pm

Divorced couple Jane and Jake are reunited at their son's college graduation after 10 years apart, and end up sleeping together. Despite Jake's marriage to a younger woman and Jane's fledgling romance with a kindly architect, the pair end up having a clandestine affair. Romantic comedy, starring Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin, Steve Martin, Julianne Moore, Lake Bell, Mary Kay Place, Rita Wilson and Alexandra Wentworth. (2009)

American Gangster, ITV, 10.40pm

The story of 1970s drug kingpin Frank Lucas, whose innovative methods of smuggling heroin into the US made him one of the leading figures in the New York underworld. A detective is assigned to bring Lucas's empire down, but his investigation is undermined by police corruption. Ridley Scott's fact-based crime drama, starring Denzel Washington, Russell Crowe, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Josh Brolin. (2007)

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PICK OF THE WEEK



Kayvan Novak stars in Britain Today Tonight, Friday, Channel 4, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

party. Then, an innocent game of Guess the Celebrity quickly turns into a raging debate about the EU, in which members of all ages clash.

FRIDAY

Versailles
BBC2, 9pm

Princess Palatine gets a cold reception in the bed of her new husband Philippe following their marriage celebration. Meanwhile, young Sophie learns her destiny lies in an even crueler match – by order of King Louis. Elsewhere, Bon temps spots misbehaviour that suggests a new prime suspect for the poisonings to Marchal and a remark by medic Claudine echoing an earlier comment, clarifies the case. Period drama, starring George Blagden, Jessica Clark and Lizzie Brochere.

Hospital People
BBC1, 9.30pm

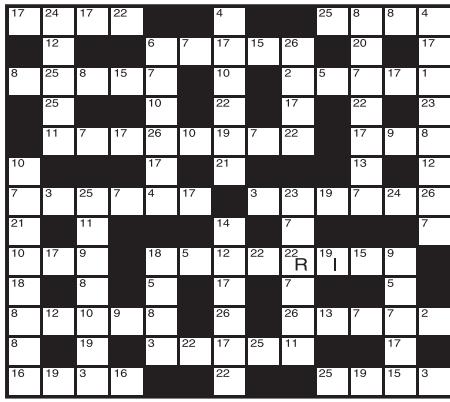
Viewers of a certain age will recall Only When I Laugh, the ITV sitcom which left millions in stitches in the 1980s. Now this similar show is also doing a good job of tickling the funnybone. In this offering, a benevolent local businessman seeks treatment in Brimlington Hospital – much to manager Susan Mitchell's delight. The cast includes Mark Williams, Janine Duvitski and Tom Binns.

BRAIN GYM

No.427

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	Q	L	B	W	D	P	O	E	Y	V	X	I	H
14	A	F	T	S	G	K	R	C	N	J	U	Z	

Quiz

- What do we call an invertebrate whose body is divided into head, thorax and abdomen?
- In which country did the mazurka originate?
- Which late comedian jokingly insulted Prince Charles at the British Comedy Awards?
- Which colonel administrator was responsible for the acquisition and foundation of Singapore?
- By what other name is Israel's Lake Tiberias known?
- Who was the first monk to become archbishop of Westminster?
- Who wrote the novel Flamingo Feather in 1955?
- Which volcano buried Pompeii in AD 79?
- Whose father was Robert I, known as The Devil?
- In which city is Romeo and Juliet set?

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

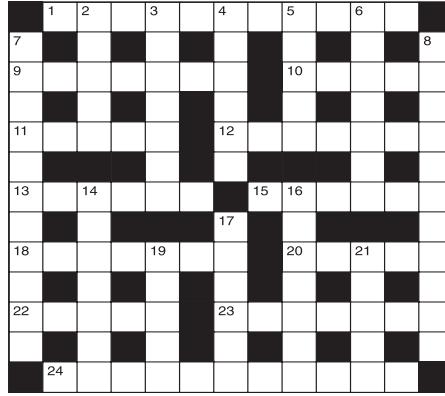
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Soldier in the nursery? (11)
- Bill speaking well? (7)
- Useful quality in the manner laid down (5)
- Spartan slave emerges from hotel (5)
- Passage taken straight from pamphlet (7)
- Sector guard (6)
- Change of backbone is plan (6)
- E.g. lanes in Africa (7)
- Kenneth is to receive the souvenir (5)
- Public voter (5)
- Was seen about in this place since (7)
- Relate empty reforms in moderation (11)
- Soldier in the nursery? (11)
- Bill speaking well? (7)
- Useful quality in the manner laid down (5)
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- Was seen about in this place since (7)
- Relate empty reforms in moderation (11)
- Fresh fiction (5)
- He can look down easily on lots of people (7)
- Almost No 1 amongst ancient cities (6)
- Still about since a fermenting agent (5)
- Don't touch sailor with a blemish (7)
- Strained atmosphere while flying (4,7)
- Dignity of ranks in countries (11)
- Yield on one occasion in three consecutive letters (7)
- The condition of the sufferer under treatment? (7)
- Blooming river? (6)
- Rise to such costume (3-2)
- Get down to service instruction (5)

Down

- Fresh fiction (5)
- He can look down easily on lots of people (7)
- Almost No 1 amongst ancient cities (6)
- Still about since a fermenting agent (5)
- Don't touch sailor with a blemish (7)
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- Get down to service instruction (5)



Quick Clues:

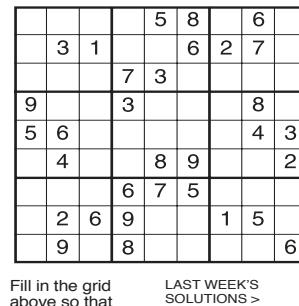
Across

- Knowledge (11)
- Withdrawal (7)
- Allude (5)
- Flanks (5)
- In name only (7)
- Selected (6)
- Calculate (6)
- Treachery (7)
- Consumed (5)
- Speechify (5)
- Speedy (7)
- Informal (4,3,4)
- Well known (5)
- Superintend (7)
- Revolt (6)
- To drum (5)
- Umbrage (7)
- Suing (11)
- Outside (4-3)
- Invisible (6)
- Riddle (5)
- Lock of hair (5)

Down

- Knowledge (11)
- Withdrawal (7)
- Allude (5)
- Flanks (5)
- In name only (7)
- Selected (6)
- Calculate (6)
- Treachery (7)
- Consumed (5)
- Speechify (5)
- Speedy (7)
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- Revolt (6)
- To drum (5)
- Umbrage (7)
- Suing (11)
- Outside (4-3)
- Invisible (6)
- Riddle (5)
- Lock of hair (5)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	7	9	3	1	12	4	8	6
2	3	4	7	6	8	9	5	1
6	8	1	5	4	9	2	3	7
1	6	3	4	2	7	8	9	5
8	2	7	1	9	5	6	4	3
9	4	5	8	3	6	7	1	2
7	1	6	9	5	4	3	2	8
4	5	2	6	8	3	1	7	9
3	9	8	2	7	1	5	6	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Keep left; 5 Cord; 9 Able; 10 Strikers; 11 Order; 12 Rhythme; 13 For the present; 18 Race card; 19 Avid; 20 Examine; 21 Fishy; 22 Some; 23 Standard; Down: 2 Embargo; 3 Pretext; 4 Future perfect; 6 One-time; 7 Dissect; 8 Single; 13 Forgers; 14 Reclaim; 15 Hectic; 16 Seabird; 17 Neither. QUICK - Across: 1 Peculiar; 5 Fair; 9 Menu; 10 Appeared; 11 Minus; 12 Embroll; 13 Fellow-feeling; 18 Outright; 19 City; 20 Derange; 21 Snubs; 22 Dull; 23 Reviewer. Down: 2 Eremite; 3 Unusual; 4 Apple of the eye; 6 A priori; 7 Reel flag; 8 Feeble; 13 Flooded; 14 Literal; 15 Orient; 16 Licence; 17 Notable.

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

73921
4522785
92262

gives an animal,
gives a second animal,
gives birds.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Peri cool place for lunch

It's a popular high street chain and Wolverhampton Nando's has had a revamp. EMILY BRIDGEWATER checks it out

MEDIUM, hot, or extra hot? How spicy do you like your Nando's? How hot?

If the sub-zero temperature in Wolverhampton's revamped branch of Nando's was anything to go by, at the time we visited, then it's extra hot all the way. My two pals and I visited the popular Afro-Portuguese chain one lunchtime, shortly after it had reopened following a month-long refurb.

They've done a good job; the restaurant has been opened out and new fixtures and fittings have given it slightly tired interior a fresh lease of life. But the first thing we all comment on is the temperature – it's colder in than out. We are however, warmly greeted by a friendly member of staff who offers us a choice of tables.

Options

And so to the menu, which everyone knows features predominantly chicken plus a handful of other options for veggies and the likes.

There was talk of salads but all good intentions were thrown out and we opted for burgers, pittas and plenty of sides.

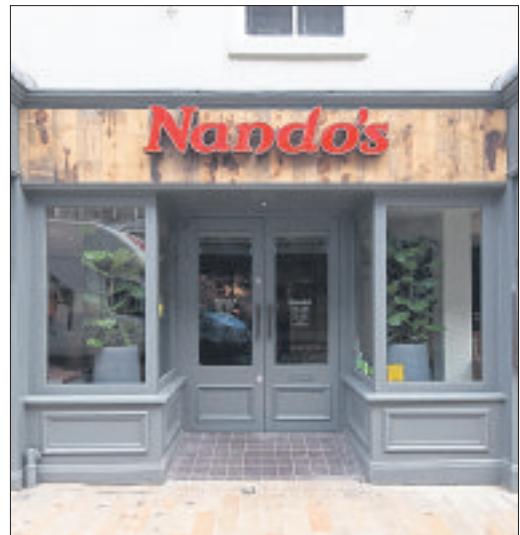
The man among us plumped for the butterflied chicken, while my friend and I sidelined the chicken in favour of beanie burgers.

Orders are placed at the counter – the same guy serves me as showed us to our table, and he's as breezy and friendly as when we arrived. Full marks for pleasant staff.

Starters included humous with peri peri drizzle and warm pitta bread strips and a trio of chicken wings spiced to your liking. Meanwhile, the main courses feature all manner of chicken dishes, from burgers to the whole she-



Nice 'n' spicy – how hot do you like your chicken at Nando's? Here it's served with spicy rice and a side salad



The newly-revamped Nando's in Queen Street, Wolverhampton

bang, as well as a fillet steak wrap for those who the lure of red meat is too great, and salads for those 'trying to be good'.

We start with gigantic olives and some spicy nuts although unfortunately my friend finds a hair in the latter. Add three refillable drinks and some good conversation and we're kept busy enough until our main courses arrive. The olives were fairly plump and juicy, and the nuts – a pleasing mix of cashews, almonds and macadamias – well-seasoned and moreish.

The double butterfly chicken drenched in hot sauce looked appetising, as did the two beanie burgers (both medium hot) in pitta breads, packed with crunchy shredded cabbage and carrot. Three spicy chicken wings plus sides including macho peas, coleslaw, chips, mixed salad, corn on the cob and a supergrain salad, and we tucked in with gusto.

My beanie patty in a pitta, topped with haloumi, filled a hole without being something particularly memorable. The burger fea-

tures chickpeas, sweetcorn, lentils, peas and pumpkin seeds, bound together with Cheddar cheese, although none of the ingredients particularly stood out. It all seemed a bit of a bland mush. The salad was fresh and the cheese griddled to perfection.

The chicken muncher was also overwhelmed, commenting that his bird was a bit dry. The same goes for the chicken wings, he said, mournfully. Side dishes were hits and misses. We all agreed the supergrain salad

with grains, greens, beans and an avocado and buttermilk dressing. We also liked the minty, chilli-spiked macho peas.

We managed to munch through most of it and we were left stuffed and unable to face dessert despite tantalising options such as a traditional Portuguese custard tart (natas), salted caramel brownies and carrot cake.

The bill came in at £50.85 including three refillable soft drinks, which seemed reasonable for the sheer volume of food.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO HOME
BUYING AND
LETTING

Spacious family homes boasts an entertainment room

An impressive and deceptively spacious four-bedroomed detached residence in an exclusive development off Stafford Road in Westhall Gate, Bloxwich, comes with four bedrooms and a cinema/entertainment room.

A unique residence, it is for sale through Goodchilds at £350,000 with no chain.

Deceptively spacious, this modern family home is arranged over three floors and finished to an exceptional standard. Ideally situated in a very exclusive part of Bloxwich, and having four reception rooms, it has ample space for the larger family.

The lower ground floor has a cinema/entertainment room, a cloakroom and a utility room. The ground floor consists of three reception rooms and a superb fitted breakfast kitchen whilst the first floor has two double bedrooms, a master bedroom with en-suite shower room and a main family bathroom.

Outside is an integral garage, block paved driveway allowing parking for several cars and a fully enclosed rear garden ideal for entertaining guests.

In more detail the entrance hall has stairs off to the first floor and basement levels. The lounge has a window to the front and French doors to the rear garden and a feature fireplace with an inset gas fire. The sitting room has a window to the rear.

Having French doors to the rear garden, the dining room also has double doors to the breakfast kitchen. The kitchen has wall cupboards, a range of base units with worktops over, a gas hob with extractor over, integrated double electric oven, integral dishwasher and fridge.

An inner lobby has stairs to the lower level. The laundry room has units with worktops over and under stairs storage. The utility room has wall cupboards, a range of base units with worktops over and plumbing for a washing machine. Off a hallway is bedroom four which has a window to the front and halogen down lighters. Off the first floor landing, the master bedroom is en-suite. Bedroom two has storage in the eaves. Bedroom three has storage in the eaves.

The family bathroom has a panel bath with a mixer shower on the taps.

BLOXWICH £350,000



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Goodchilds

TEL: 01922711444

EMAIL: bloxwich@goodchilds-uk.com

KEY FEATURES

Impressive detached

4 bedrooms

Exclusive development

Cinema/entertainment room

No chain



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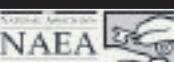
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WALSALL
CALTHORPE CLOSE






- Detached Family Home
- Generous Accommodation
-
- Viewing Essential
- sing; entrance hall, through hallway,

\$350,000

CHESLYN HAY
THE HOLLIES





- Outstanding Detached
- 3 Reception Rooms
- Conservatory
- Utility Room, WC
- 4 Double Bedrooms

\$385,000

REEDSWOOD
BENTLEY LANE

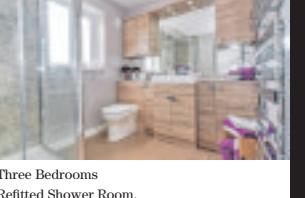



- 3 Bed Semi
- Popular Location
- Lounge, Dining Room
- Kitchen

- Enclosed Rear Garden
- Detached Garage
- Viewing Recommended
- No Chain

\$134,950

WALSALL
MINEWOOD CLOSE

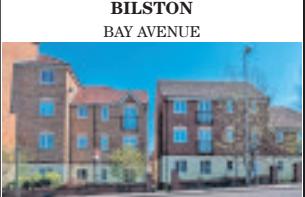



- Stunning Extended Detached
- Kitchen Diner,
- Generous lounge,
- Conservatory.

- Three Bedrooms
- Refitted Shower Room.
- low Maintenance Garden
- Block Paved Driveway.

\$194,950

BILSTON
BAY AVENUE



- First Floor Apartment
- Spacious Lounge/Diner

- Kitchen
- 2 Bedrooms
- Re-fitted En-Suite
- Family Bathroom

\$115,000

AKRON GATE
MERCURY DRIVE



- Modern Home
- Lounge, WC
- Generous Kitchen/Diner

- 3 Bedrooms
- Ensuite to Master
- Bathroom
- Gardens

\$149,950

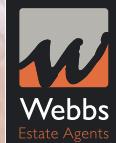
CHESLYN HAY
LITTLEWOOD LANE



- New Build Bungalow
- Sought After Location
- Through Hallway

- Lounge/Diner
- Kitchen
- 3 Bedrooms
- Bathroom

\$275,000



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Building society figures suggest home lending 'in neutral gear'

Mortgage lending was down by nearly a fifth in March compared with a year earlier, figures from banks and building societies show.

An estimated £21.4 billion worth of home loans were handed out last month – marking a 19 per cent decrease compared with March 2016, the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) said.

The CML said mortgage lending appears to be in "neutral gear" – and it does not expect the general election on June 8 to have a marked effect on lending.

The sharp year-on-year fall in lending was expected, the CML said.

In spring 2016, there had been significant increases in activity as borrowers rushed to beat a stamp duty hike that was imposed on people buying second homes, including buy-to-let investors, on April 1 2016.

The mortgage lending total for March 2017 was still a 19 per cent jump compared with the previous month, with £17.9 billion worth of home loans advanced in February.

The CML said in total, around £59.1 billion worth of mortgages were handed out in the first three months of 2017, marking a four per cent decrease on the fourth quarter of last year and a six per cent decrease on the £63 billion lent in the first quarter of 2016.

Borrowers

CML senior economist Mohammad Jamei said: "Mortgage lending appears to be in neutral gear."

"Our gross estimate for March is £21.4 billion and this is broadly in line with average monthly lending over the past year."

"Within this aggregate level, there has been a shift towards first-time buyer and re-mortgage customers, away from home movers and buy-to-let landlords."

"We expect this profile to continue over the short term, as low mortgage rates encourage existing borrowers to re-mortgage and government schemes help first-time buyers."

"We do not expect any marked effect from the general election."

Howard Archer, an economist at IHS Markit, said: "We share the CML's view that June's general election is unlikely to materially affect the housing market."

"Consequently, we believe house price gains over 2017 will be limited to no more than 2.5 per cent – and there is a very real possibility that it could come in lower than that."

Jonathan Harris, director of mortgage broker Anderson Harris, said: "The mortgage market continues to tick along with competitive products on offer to those borrowers who are getting on with the business of buying and selling, or re-mortgaging their homes."

Two in five landlords in the UK are women, analysis reveals

Women now account for two in five landlords in the UK with most female investors using property lettings as a means to topping up their monthly income from other sources, according to new research.

An analysis of tens of thousands of landlords by Simple Landlords Insurance shows that 40% of landlords are women. By comparison, only 17% of SME owners are women which the firm believe indicates how property is moving towards equality at a faster pace than other industries.

Also, poll of over 400 landlords showed how male and female investors have different goals for their investments with 63% of female landlords saying that using rent for monthly income was their long term business goal, as opposed to long term capital growth, compared with 53% of men.

The research also found that women are more likely than men to have become accidental landlords. Some 48% of female landlords choose to be buy to let investors compared to 61% of men.

Indeed, women were more likely to have become landlords after moving in with a partner and renting out their own property or through purchasing a property for a family member to live in, such as a child attending university.

Female landlords are also likely to provide rented accommodation to a more diverse range of tenants than men. Some 35% said they would rent to housing benefit recipients, compared with 25% of men. Women were also more open to renting to pensioners, students and single employed tenants.

"As recently as 1970 women could be refused a mortgage without a male guarantor. But buying, selling, renovating, and renting property is no longer just for the boys," said Alexandra Huntley, Simple Landlords Insurance head of operations.

"Those stereotypes are firmly consigned to history. Women have been steadily gaining ground over the last 50 years and are increasingly gaining financial independence through property investment," she added.

The research is included in a new Women in Property Report along with real life examples and practical advice for female landlords from the Female Property Alliance. It includes the story of Bindar Dosanjh, alliance founder, who built a multi-million pound portfolio after she became a single mother and had to rent rooms to pay the bills and survive.

"For me, investing in property was about having the freedom to make choices about my life. I have made plenty of mistakes along the way but have been able to fall back on property income when I lost my job in the 2008 recession and again when I became seriously ill and was unable to work," she said.

"Being a good communicator, a good negotiator and being good at managing people are key attributes for any landlord. They are also things women can be great at but don't always recognise as valuable and



K. Stuart Swash

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More than half of first-time buyers

More than half of aspiring first-time buyers are feeling positive about their chances of getting on the property ladder soon, a survey has found.

The biggest proportion of people surveyed, at 40.1%, described themselves as hopeful when asked about their ability to achieve their goal soon, while a further 16.9% said they were feeling confident – making a total of 57% who felt positive overall.

But the research, from conveyancing services provider My Home Move, also found more than a quarter (26.3%) of would-be first-time buyers felt unsure about their chances of getting on the property ladder.

A further one in 10 (10.1%) felt their hopes were unrealistic – while one in 16 (6.1%) said they felt "depressed" when asked about their prospects of owning their own home.

Parents

Some would-be property buyers are also pinning their hopes on the "bank of mum and dad" to wholly fund their deposit.

Some 6.2% of people surveyed believed their parents would gift them enough money for a deposit, meaning they could apply for a mortgage without the need for further savings or support through a government scheme.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of

aspiring first-time buyers said they were saving for their deposits themselves. The survey of 1,000 aspiring first-time buyers also found that, when they were growing up, people tended to say they had expected to be aged around 25 to 30 when they achieved the milestone of owning their own property. Recent figures from the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) show the average first-time buyer taking out a mortgage in February was 30 years old.

Doug Crawford, chief executive of My Home Move, said: "Of those we surveyed, over a quarter expected to be home owners by the time they hit their mid-20s, but unfortunately the reality is very different."

He said the findings suggest there



Highly-rated family home is packed out with great features

WALSALL
£350,000 <<<

In a highly regarded cul-de-sac location, this extended family home in Calthorpe Close, off Skip Lane, Walsall, is packed with the 'wow' factor.

It is for sale through Webbs at £350,000.

With generous and diverse accommodation, this deceptively spacious and lovingly maintained extended family home is also close to all local amenities and within an excellent school catchment area.

The accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a through hallway, a lounge, a family room, a dining room, a conservatory, a kitchen and a guest WC. To the first floor there are three double bedrooms and a stunning refitted family bathroom.

Outside is a generous driveway and landscaped gardens.

Call 01922 663399.



Detached bungalow in sought-after location

WALSALL
£279,950

In a popular and much requested location near Stafford Road, Bloxwich, this splendid appointed extended detached bungalow in Lydford Road is for sale through Skitts at £279,950.

With gas central heating and double glazing, this lovely property includes an extended dining kitchen with integrated appliances, complemented by a fully tiled fitted bathroom with separate shower cubicle. There is also a tandem garage and off road parking to the front.

Briefly, the property has a reception hall with a built-in storage cupboard, a front facing lounge, a superb extended breakfast kitchen/diner, dining room with French doors to the garden and a utility room, two bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and a fully tiled bathroom with a white suite including a Jacuzzi bath.

Call 01922 478104.

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57 Ettingshall Rd, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi-Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus



35 Dalkeith Street, Walsall
2 Bed Mid-Terraced House
Guide: £24,000 - £29,000



2 Barnard Rd, Sutton Coldfield
2 Bed Detached Bungalow
Guide: £250,000 - £275,000



23 Chetwynd Rd, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi-Detached House
Guide: £85,000 - £95,000



2 Aston Street, Penfields
3 Bed End-Terraced House
Guide: £54,000 - £59,000



9 Hadley Way, Walsall
3 Bed Mid-Terraced House
Guide: £79,000 plus



14 Kent Street, Walsall
3 Bed End-Terraced House
Guide: £50,000 plus



62 Bloxwich Road, Walsall
2 Bed Mid-Terraced House
Guide: £20,000 plus



27 Dalkeith Street, Walsall
2 Bed Mid-Terraced House
Guide: £24,000 - £29,000



Flat 28 St Giles Court, Rosehills Gardens, Willenhall
2 Bed 7th Floor Apartment
Guide: £10,000 - £15,000

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Modern and spacious family house located in popular area

PELSALL
£224,950 <<<

A modern four-bedroomed detached property in the popular area of Pelsall, 10 Wood Lane, has spacious accommodation throughout.

Also with gas central heating, double glazing, a garage and off road parking, it is for sale through Skitts at £224,950.

Ideal for a family, its spacious accommodation includes an entrance hall, a lounge with a feature fireplace and a gas fire, a bay window to the front and stairs off.

It also has an archway to a dining area with French-style doors to the rear garden.

The kitchen includes an integrated electric oven and a door to a utility room with plumbing and space for a washing machine and a door to the garden and a door to a downstairs WC. The master bedroom is en-suite.

Contact Skitts on 01902 631151 or visit www.skitts.net



Immaculate home with excellent transport links

WALSALL WOOD
£175,000

Built by Cameron Homes in 2014, this immaculately presented three-bedroomed mid town house in Lichfield Road, Walsall Wood, is for sale through Goodchilds at £175,000.

A beautifully designed three-bedroom home located in a popular area, it is within easy access of local schools, shops and with excellent transport links to Walsall, Aldridge, Lichfield and the M6 Toll road.

Inside the property comprises of an entrance hall, a guest cloakroom, the main living area, a superb kitchen/diner with three bedrooms, an en-suite and the main bathroom to the first floor. Outside is an artificially turfed rear garden and a gate accessing the two allocated parking spaces.

Call 01543 226655 or see www.goodchilds-uk.com

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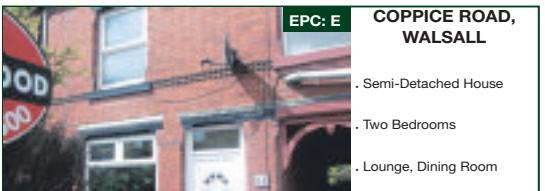
BEECHWOOD AVENUE, WEDNESFIELD
EPC: E
. Semi-Detached House
. Three Bedroom
. Lounge/Dining Room
. Kitchen
. Conservatory
. UPVC DG, GCH
£625pcm - plus fees



TAME CLOSE, WALSALL
EPC: C
. Detached Bungalow
. Lounge / Dining Room
. Kitchen, Bathroom
. Two Bedrooms
. UPVC DG & GCH
. Driveway, Garden
£600pcm - plus fees



WILLOW AVENUE, WEDNESFIELD
EPC: D
. Semi-Detached House
. Hallway, Lounge
. Dining Kitchen, Bathroom
. Three Bedrooms
. UPVC DG, GCH
. Driveway
£595pcm - plus fees



COPPIE ROAD, WALSALL
EPC: E
. Semi-Detached House
. Two Bedrooms
. Lounge, Dining Room
. Kitchen, Bathroom
. UPVC DG, GCH
. Driveway, Garage
£500pcm - plus fees



WARDLES LANE, GREAT WYRLEY
EPC: D
. Second Floor flat
. Hallway, Fitted Kitchen
. Lounge With Balcony Off
. Three Bedrooms
. Bathroom With Shower
. Terrace, GCH, UPVC DG
£475pcm - plus fees



COTTERELL COURT, WALSALL
EPC: C
. Ground FLoor Flat
. Hallway, Lounge
. Kitchen Area
. Bathroom, One Bedroom
. Storage Cupboard
. Electric Heater, UPVC DG
£390pcm - plus fees



CHURCH STREET, DARLASTON
EPC: D
. Ground Floor Flat
. One Bedroom
. Lounge, Kitchen
. Shower Room
. UPVC Double Glazing
. Electric Heating
£350pcm - plus fees



SUTTON ROAD, WALSALL
EPC: D
. First Floor Flat
. Communal Entrance
. Reception Hall
. Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen
. Two Bedrooms
. GCH, Garage
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£184,950

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£135,000

Queens Lea, Willenhall WV12

£130,000

Farmhouse Road, Willenhall WV12

Guide Price £94,000



Banks Street, The Manor WV13

£360,000

Stubbington Close, Willenhall, WV13

£160,000

Hillbury Drive, Coppice Farm, WV12

£135,000

Spindle Tree Rise, Willenhall, WV12

£120,000

Keysmith Close, Willenhall, WV13

£90,000



Contact your Local High Street Branch.

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£300,000

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£150,000

Snape Road, Ashmore Park, WV11

£135,000

Bilston Lane, Willenhall, WV13

£95,000

Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, WV13

£85,000



Walsall

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The Exchange, Bloxwich

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- Above Retail Premises
- Bloxwich High Street Location
- Lounge/Kitchen
- Shower Room

• Separate W.C.

• DHSS Accepted

• Sorry No Pets

• Rating: 13

• Deposit on Application

£350.00 PCM



The Exchange, Bloxwich

- One bedroom
- Entrance Hallway
- Large Separate Kitchen
- Electric Heating
- Bathroom with Shower

- Double Glazing
- Separate W.C.
- Sorry No Pets
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 7

£400.00 PCM



High Street, Bloxwich

- One Bed Top Floor Apartment
- Bloxwich Town Centre
- Parking to Rear
- Lounge
- Rating: TBC
- DHSS Accepted

£400.00 PCM



Walker Road, Walsall

- Two bedroom Apartment
- Large Open Plan Lounge
- Modern Kitchen
- Lounge
- Entrance Hallway
- Double Bedrooms

- Off Road Parking
- Gas Central Heating
- Intercom Access
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 77

£495.00 PCM



Elmsdale Court, Walsall

- Two Bedrooms
- Entrance Hall
- Double glazing
- Electric heating
- Lounge

- Fitted Kitchen
- Allocated Parking
- Sorry No DHSS
- No Pets or Smokers
- Rating: 34

£495.00 PCM



Envile Close, Walsall

- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Popular Tumberry Estate
- Fitted Kitchen
- Lounge with Patio Doors
- Bathroom
- Sorry No DHSS

£525.00 PCM



Bloxwich Road North, Willenhall

- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached House
- Lounge to Front
- Large Kitchen / Diner
- Downstairs WC
- Modern Family Bathroom
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers

£550.00 PCM



Terret Close, Walsall

- Two Bedroom Apartment
- Town Centre Location
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Communal Entrance

- Open Plan Kitchen
- Allocated Parking Space
- Security Entrance Gates
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers
- Rating: 54

£525.00 PCM



Valley Road, Walsall

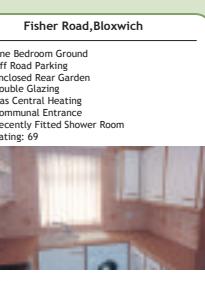
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- Downstairs W.C.
- Family Bathroom

- Front Driveway
- Off Road Parking
- Rear Garden with Patio Area
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 69

Monthly Rental Of £495



LET!



Fisher Road, Bloxwich

- One Bedroom Ground
- Off Road Parking
- Enclosed Rear Garden
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Communal Entrance
- Recently Fitted Shower Room
- Rating: 69

£400.00 PCM



LET!



Thorbury Road, Walsall

- Two Bedroom 1st Floor Apartment
- Entrance Hallway
- Open Plan Kitchen/Lounge
- Bathroom with Shower
- Allocated Parking Space
- Electric Heating
- Sorry No DHSS
- Rating: 69

£495.00 PCM



LET!



Glenaeagles Road, Walsall

- Located on Popular Tumberry Estate
- Two Bedroom Mid Terraced
- Entrance Hallway
- Lounge
- Kitchen / Diner
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers

£550.00 PCM



LET!



Murdock Way, Walsall

- Three Bedroom Terraced
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Front and Rear Gardens
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: 44

£475.00 PCM

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Impressive seven seater from Skoda

By Ian Donaldson

How gratifying it must be for Skoda – a brand always strong on value – to see customers lining up to spend more than they could get away with.

For nearly everyone ordering a new Skoda Kodiaq (its name alluding to a bear found in Alaska) is available from £21,565 but 85 per cent of potential purchasers want posher ones costing more than £7,000 extra.

That surely signals Skoda's warranted arrival among cars that are fancied for their looks and ability more than their list price. A drive in the newcomer says the first owners of a Kodiaq made the right choice.

Longer (4,697mm) than both a Volvo XC60 or Audi Q5, the Kodiaq is a genuinely spacious car, with three rows of seats in the upper two trim levels (SE L and Edition) with the rearmost pair capable of comfortably seating a couple of young teenagers.

They might have to scramble past a second row of seats that slide forward but whose bases don't tilt upward, but the Kodiaq is going to be an answer for families sometimes called on to transport kids to football.

Better still, even with the third row in use there's the same amount of luggage space behind them that you might find in your average small hatchback – so enough for a decent shop. Fold all the seats down and the Kodiaq could probably house its namesake.

You can't opt for the third row in the entry level Kodiaq S and it costs £1,000 on the next grade up (SE) but almost all the early adopters are buying three-rowed versions anyway. They'll also favour a Kodiaq with a

150 horsepower 2.0 litre diesel, the same unit that does sterling service in a host of other Volkswagen Group cars, from Audi through SEAT to VW itself. It costs from £27,114 in an SE level car, equipped with a 6-speed DSG automatic gearbox. Also on offer is a 190 horsepower diesel and a trio of petrol engines, two 1.4 litres offering 125 or 150 horsepower and a more powerful 2.0 litre petrol with 180 horses. The lowest powered petrol model is the only Kodiaq available with a manual 6-speed gearbox and front wheel drive.

All the rest of the range is equipped with either an auto box or on-demand all-wheel drive, or both. They're both on parade in the current range topping Edition model, costing £34,050 and coming with the 150 horsepower diesel, whose 144g/km tailpipe emissions promise a reasonable £200 road tax hit from new under the latest Treasury revamp.

Most powerful engine at present is the 190 horsepower 2.0 litre diesel, available in a single SL L trim version for £33,110. Later in the year we'll see a Scout model with more obvious off-road looks (think plastic wheel arch extensions) and then a SportLine option too (think slightly lowered, firmed suspension and some black paint).

Without those stiffened springs the Kodiaq proved itself a delightfully comfortable companion on some indifferent roads in deepest western Britain, combining fine body control with an ability to soak up the rash of potholes and cracks our roads have succumbed to.

There's a sense of real solidity in the Kodiaq's cabin, smart enough to make you wonder how the designers at Audi make their cars look and feel worth all the extra cash.

Everything, from simplest switch to the satellite navigation system on the SE L and

SKODA KODIAQ, FROM £21,564



The Kodiaq proved itself a delightfully comfortable companion on some indifferent roads

Edition models does its job so well you know many candles have been burned at both ends to make things just ... well, work.

The entry level S, with just a 1.4 petrol engine offered comes with LED daytime running lights, manual air conditioning, 17 inch alloy wheels, DAB radio and SmartLink to easily connect your smartphone. Up a grade, to SE and we find 18 inch alloys, cruise control, rear parking sensors, dual zone climate control and auto dimming mirrors.

The likely most popular level – SE L, tops up these goodies with sat nav, still larger (19 inch) alloys, powered tailgate, Alcantara trim and heated front seats.

Topping the Kodiaq tree, the Edition piles on leather upholstery, metallic paint and chrome roof rails. Added techno features include lane assist, high beam assist and wireless charging for a compatible mobile phone.

Depending on model, you'll also find evidence of Skoda's Simply Clever thinking,

from umbrella neatly hidden in a front door to ice scraper sitting in the fuel filler flap.

But back to the ride in an SE L 150 diesel. It's no ball of fire (9.5 seconds to 0-62mph), but plenty potent enough for satisfactory progress and quiet with.

A journey's end 50.5mpg on the dash readout (the official average is 52.3mpg) hinted that longer term acquaintance with a Kodiaq would only cement a positive relationship with an impressive new Skoda.

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UK deliveries are expected in late summer

XC60 is brimful of safety technology

Priced from £37,205, the XC60 is available to order now, with UK deliveries expected to start in late summer.

A choice of three engines – two diesel units and one petrol – are available, though a petrol-electric plug-in hybrid version will arrive later on in the year.

Each car is fitted with an eight-speed automatic gearbox and four-wheel drive as standard, with base D4 cars returning a claimed fuel consumption of 55.4mpg.

Even more powerful D5 versions should provide an economical drive, with Volvo claiming consumption figures of 51.4mpg.

The most powerful petrol T5, producing 250bhp, should return 39.2mpg and emit 164g/km CO2. The D4 and D5 models emit 133g/km and 144g/km CO2 respectively.

Jon Wakefield, managing director of Volvo Car UK, said: "We're incredibly excited about the brand-new XC60."

"Not only does it bring all the style and advanced technology from our larger cars to our best-selling SUV, it is the latest step in Volvo's transformation."

There are three trim levels to choose from, in the form of Momentum, R-Design and Inscription.

Even base-spec cars receive LED headlights as standard, as well as two-zone climate control and 18-inch alloy wheels.

Sporty R-Design cars receive 19-inch alloy wheels and sport suspension, alongside a gloss black front grille. Pilot Assist – Volvo's semi-autonomous drive technology – is available as an optional extra on the XC60.

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Snow drift: taking it ice and easy with racing superstars

By Rebecca Chaplin

"It's all about looking at where you need to go and steering before you reach that point," explained Aleksi Halen as we skidded across the ice.

"Keep your movements smooth and counteract where the car is turning to keep it going in the direction you need."

Halen is a racer in the Legends series, but today he's showing me how to manoeuvre round a track etched into a frozen lake in northern Finland.

He's got the natural mix of calmness and confidence you'd expect of a Finnish racing driver who's been traversing tracks such as this since the age of six. "If we stop racing, then we stop going where we need to go," he said as the back end of the car I'm steering overtakes the rear and he forces the steering wheel in the opposite direction to realign us on the track.

Driving on ice is something you'd expect to be unnerving, but in our Seat Leon Cupra with full traction control on, you'd barely notice it. As long as you're driving carefully, that is. Push the car a little too far and, even equipped with snow tyres, you'll find yourself sliding, until the electronic stability control kicks in and narrowly saves you crashing into a snow drift.

Turn that off and it's a very different story. The car effectively becomes a giant ice skate, with traction in a straight line, but little grip as soon as you attempt to turn.

Seat has brought us to Finland where the snow is thick and the temperature is below zero to demonstrate what its 4Drive four-wheel-drive system can do in extreme weather – with the aim that it'll show us how this clever tech can benefit drivers in the far less extreme UK.

We'd try what are more conventional methods in these parts, from huskies to snowmobiles, which have been carefully honed to work in these conditions. However, Seat's SUVs and sporty hatchbacks are not what you would usually associate with snow, let alone ice.

Our day started in a far more civilised manner, testing out the car maker's latest addition to its range, the Ateca SUV, across the snowy



It seems unnatural at first to counter-steer away from the way you want to go on ice and snow

roads of Kuusamo. These family-sized cars transported us to our ice lake adventure with poise and grace.

Halen sits in the back directing me to the Juha Kankkunen Driving Academy where he works. We travelled up steep inclines through forests and bounded across the snow with surprising ease as we took in the bleak, but beautiful snowy vistas.

Kankkunen will be a name you'll recognise if you follow rallying. This Flying Finn, for those not in the know, has won the World Rally Championship four times.

So, what else would you do as one of the most famous rallying drivers in the world, but buy a frozen lake in your home country to turn into your ideal race track? And what could possibly make a better location for learning how to tackle these conditions?

Halen takes me for one lap, which seems only suitable for trained racing drivers, before pulling over and telling me to get in the driving seat. With one foot sliding underneath me the idea that I'll be driving

on this seems daunting. We try first with all of the electronic elements of the car allowed to do what they want and keep me out of the snow. He's confident I can cope, or at least that there's enough snow to cushion me and the Leon from any mistakes, and turns off the ESP.

It's unnatural at first to counter-steer away from the way you want to go, but once you get into a rhythm, it makes sense. It also helps that Halen is shouting at me to turn, brake and accelerate, which I follow diligently. To my surprise, Halen sounds vaguely impressed with what I'm doing as I turn the car into the corner on the approach before straightening it as we hit the apex to slide through the remainder and power to the next turn. "Power on to move the car to the inside and lift off to keep to the inside," is his next piece of advice as we slide around a hairpin bend.

Sure enough, by adding some power, the car carries on sideways, and as I ease off, we slow to keep tight to the apex.

To show me how it is really done, I get a trip round the circuit with World Touring Car Championship driver Jordi Gené and, the man himself, Juha Kankkunen. Modest Gené takes me round first, explaining that he'll be nowhere near as smooth as the Finn. Fearlessly, he speeds around the track, explaining that he's going for fun skids rather than the fastest time – but he could have fooled me.

Next, I get a chance to meet Kankkunen, the calmest man I've ever encountered. He acts as if he is cruising around the track, with the smallest inputs made to the steering wheel, but attacks the corners with speed. Unsurprisingly, the few laps I get with him are over extremely quickly.

I left the car feeling that I needed to move to Finland and rekindle my dream of a career as a racing driver. Although my time on the snow was short, it certainly showed me what a challenge ice driving is and gave me some insight into how to handle a car should UK roads turn arctic.

Keep tyre care top of the check list



With longer days and brighter skies, we love nothing more than jumping in the car for a day trip or weekend away; but before you do, check your car tyres. As the only point of contact a car has with the road, it is important that the tyres are kept in good condition.

Ring, supplier of vehicle lighting, auto electric and car accessories, suggest that there are three simple tips we can all follow to be more 'tyre aware', to prevent a blow out and get your break off to a great start.

Pressure:

Check the tyre pressure every two weeks, and definitely before the start of any long journey.

Too much air in your tyres can be very dangerous – not only is there a chance that you won't have adequate grip on the road, but it will also increase braking distance. Not enough air and you will burn fuel quicker, reduce the level of tread sooner and risk damaging the wheels, which can be extremely costly.

Maintaining the correct level of pressure not only reduces the amount of fuel being used, but also lowers carbon dioxide emissions.

Tyre pressure is so important that it can be found in three locations on a vehicle – the tyres themselves, the handbook and either in the sill of the driver's door or fuel cap. Tyres warm up when you drive artificially increasing the pressure, so ideally you should check tyre pressure at home. Keeping an air compressor to hand, such as Ring's RAC635 12V Preset Digital Compressor, will allow you to check and inflate tyres quickly and to the correct PSI.

Tread:

If your tyres do not have the correct level of

tread they are unsafe and likely to be illegal, and could result in penalty points and a fine if you're stopped by the police.

The legal minimum tread depth for cars in the UK is 1.6mm throughout the central three-quarters of breadth of the tyre tread and around its entire outer circumference. Anything below this is unlawful and dangerous, it will reduce stopping distance when braking and risk your car skidding, especially in wet weather.

Tyre tread should be checked regularly. The easiest way to do this is by keeping a tyre gauge in the glovebox. Insert the gauge into the tread to take a reading. If it is anything near to or below the legal requirement, then you should take your car for a tyre change.

Ring has a range of analogue and digital tyre gauges suitable for checking both tread and pressure.

Be prepared:

Follow these tips and you are less likely to suffer a blowout.

However, there is still the chance that a sharp object in the road could pierce the tyre, so it's always worth keeping a repair kit or a can of tyre sealant in the car to avoid being stranded.

Ring's RTK1 Emergency Tyre Kit has everything needed to temporarily fix a puncture without the need for tools or wheel changes. This will enable you to go to the nearest garage and prevent you from being stuck at the side of the road waiting for recovery.

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The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council. Applications can be viewed at First Stop Civic Centre, Walsall, WS1 2SD, phone 01922 652000, planning.representations@walsall.gov.uk or writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Walsall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG. Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice.
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Busy times – club chairman David Robinson in front of the pavilion



The club pavilion which should be open later this year



Hands on – all hands to the deck as helpers turn out to get things ready



Cannock Cricket Club getting ready for the new season

Ricky training with a WBA champion

RICKY SUMMERS has been taking his preparations for a shot at the British light heavyweight title to world level. It has been confirmed that his rescheduled shot at title holder Frank Buglioni will take place on Saturday June 3.

It will again be at the O2 Arena in London where Summers, from Tipton, and Buglioni were first due to meet on the under-card to the clash between David Haye and Tony Bellew.

The titlist withdrew from that March 4 date after sustaining a cut in training, but Matchroom Boxing promoter Eddie Hearn has stayed true to his word that the contest will still take place.

Summers has shared a training ring with Nathan Cleverly, the Welshman who is the reigning WBA title holder and two-time world champion in the light heavyweight division.

Summers has also put another world ruler, Carl Froch, through his paces in the past as he works up towards his own night of reckoning.

He said: "Training with Nathan is ideal for me, because Frank is big at the weight although I think I'll be the naturally bigger man on the night."

"I'm just over the moon to have a second chance."

Neal's frustration over bar on race

STOURBRIDGE'S Matt Neal has criticised the decision to bar him starting the final race of the second weekend of the British Touring Car Championship.

Three-time champion Neal is already 42 points adrift of leader Tom Ingram in the standings after a promising start to his Donington Park weekend petered out.

After qualifying fifth, Neal took second in the first race and seventh in the second before a premature end to the third.

Having taken the lead at the first start, Neal aquaplaned off the circuit.

He was pushed out of the gravel by the marshals and took up his front-row position for the restart, only to be told he couldn't race after receiving 'outside assistance'.

But Neal said: "If the race stops before the leader has done two laps it's declared a no contest and all available cars can restart the race."

It's something we've got to take up now."

Davies is keeping true to his weight

TIVIDALE'S Ryan Davies plans to remain at welterweight as he makes the transition from kickboxer to paid pugilist. The 24-year-old is preparing to become a pro with a four-round bout against Matthew Ashmole in Birmingham tomorrow.

He features on Errol Johnson's BCB Promotions bill at the Icknield Road fight scene, in the Edgbaston area of the Second City. The show has been titled Heavy Artillery. Davies comes into the code under the tutelage of another former kickboxer, Tyler Shakespeare, who has also brought Kyle Williams across the sports.

And Davies said: "It's a new challenge, but guts is my game and I want that title. I live the gym and I'm always on it, getting as fit as I can be. You can outwork an opponent in any sport and I don't think many opponents will be able to match me for my engine and desire. I'm training harder now than I ever have in kickboxing, because I want to do as well as I possibly can in boxing. My ambitions are high, but so is my dedication."

The main event of 'Heavy Artillery' will see Wolverhampton's Josh Burke and Coventry's Dilly Singh contest the vacant British Challenge cruiserweight title over eight rounds.

Howzat? Club building for brighter future

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Joseph Masi

"Club members have put in loads of hours across the winter to do as much as they can," he continued. "It's between 300 and 400 hours of work that's gone into getting the changing rooms ready."

"What will be the new pavilion is a 1980s building and it needs bringing up to the right specifications."

"We have got rid of a lot of stuff and done as much work as we can in the existing building which we hope will become the new changing rooms and kitchen area."

"The new pavilion extension will then be attached. Of course, work has now come to a standstill as we go through the planning process."

"But fingers crossed we will get the green light as it will make a huge difference."

Fundraising

Robinson says he expected the majority of the work to be paid for by members holding fundraising events. But the club is also looking into other revenue streams.

"We are always on the lookout for ways to generate money for the club," he added.

"We'll be putting on fundraising events and we're confident members will be able to raise the money we need. We will also look at seeing if we can apply for funds from relevant sporting bodies."

SPORTS DESK 01902 319531

How's that on building for better cricket club future?



Page 51

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Wood stall as the drop looms near

Walsall Wood 1 Heanor Town 3

WOOD needing just a point for safety went down to an Elliott Reeves hat-trick. With Alvechurch stuttering to a draw to take the title at lowly Shawbury United it means that if the Shropshire side win at relegated Brocton next Saturday and Wood lose at Westfield it will be Wood who are relegated on goal difference.

It was Wood who had the better of the early exchanges but it was the visitors who threatened first, Sean Roulston breaking up a Wood attack and finding Dominic Wilkinson wide right to run on and release Man of the Match Elliott Reeves into the right of the box, his low drive was half stopped by keeper Adam Jenkins and Drew Ricketts calmly completed the clearance.

It was Reeves on 17 minutes, riding a challenge as he raced into the right of the box, there was no appeal but inexplicably the referee blew for a penalty. Reeves calmly slotted the spot kick home.

Right on the stroke of half time a left wing corner found hot shot Reeves who swept home number two.

On 61 minutes a lovely move by Wood, through the centre ended with Leon Taylor finding Lewis Taylor Boyce on the right of the box, he ran on played a neat one-two with Molesworth before beating the advancing Joe McCormack as he raced from his line.

On 76 minutes later Reeves ran through from halfway left of centre, he went through a strong challenge, the ball bouncing kindly for him to run on into the box to calmly slide home number three, completing his hat-trick in the process. The goal knocked the stuffing out of Wood, but on 90 minutes a long ball forward into the centre of the box found Taylor, he was strong to hold the ball up but was crowded out by a posse of defenders.

Villa keep hopes of survival alive with superb show

Lichfield City 1 Pelsall Villa 3

PELSALL Villa kept their hopes of avoiding relegation alive with a superb team performance against Lichfield City on Saturday.

Right from the off Villa harried their hosts and good work by Tom Green up front resulted in a defensive error which lead to Ryan Wilkins slotting home. The visitors were soon two up with a great passing move out of midfield leaving Wilkins to score his second.

Lichfield pulled a goal back late in the first half but Pelsall held firm until half time.

Liam Degville and Tan Katsukuna controlled the midfield throughout the second half, with Wilkins and Osiris Robertson supporting Green in attack at every opportunity.

Villa got their third goal with 20 minutes to go, substitute Ryan Roberts winning the ball on the right and crossing for Wilkins to complete his hat-trick.

Pelsall go into their last game of the season on Saturday away at Studley looking for a win that could keep them in the division.

Bloxwich in impressive home finish

Bloxwich RFC 54 St Leonards RFC 14

THE last home game of a fine season saw Bloxwich finish in style, with an impressive display.

However, it was St Leonards who started stronger and deservedly stunned the home side with the two opening scores of the game to take a 0-14 lead.

Bloxwich caught their breath and soon began to put the visitors under pressure.

A well taken line out saw Bloxwich lock Craig Jones control the ball at a well set maul, and drive to the line for a powerfully worked try to make the score 5-14.

RUGBY

Bloxwich started to be more dominant with possession and were rewarded when Sean Bottomer was able to cut a good line against a stretched defence for a second try for the home side. This narrowed the gap to 10-14 at half time.

Coach Paul Coyne made some changes for the second half, with immediate impact being dealt.

This came in the form of two bone crunching tackles from Adam Bowater, which were felt all the way back to the clubhouse.

This set the tone for a seven try haul in a ram-

pant second half from Bloxwich. Skipper Richard Geary crossed the line for two of the scores as did number eight Jack Hunt.

Sean Bottomer also doubled his tally. Gareth Maclean snuffed an interception for one of his own, whilst his brother Martin Maclean set up a fine try for Brad Russell with a deft and disguised off load totally fooling the opposition. Bloxwich 2nds put in a fine display away at a well-equipped Willenhall, and can consider themselves unlucky not to have come away with a victory for their display.

Next week Bloxwich travel to Bishops Castle for the final game of the season.

Real game of 2 halves with teams

Camp Hill 24 Walsall 17

THIS was a contest that became a traditional 'game of two halves'. The hosts knew that they needed a bonus point win to guarantee an end of season play-off position. They therefore attacked at every opportunity and had the ideal start as they drove over for a try after only seven minutes.

Camp Hill, eventually, got their second try after their scrum became under pressure. But they managed to scramble the ball away and a missed tackle resulted in a fine 15th metre run for the touchdown.

Just three minutes later the hosts scored their third try, in similar circumstances, with this again coming from a scrum that was under pressure. This gave the hosts a 19-0 lead with injury time being played at the end of the first half, there was one more to come, to make it a bonus point secured by the end of half time.

The visitors used the slope on the Sharmans Road pitch to good effect

during the second half and it was pleasing to see the team being confident to run and pass the ball at every opportunity. It did result in two more scores, but they should have really scored far more. Walsall should have secured at least one score from the numerous lineouts that they had close to the Camp Hill try line. But, credit to the opposition, as they successfully overturned possession on every occasion.

Walsall made it a very nervous final quarter for the hosts after good handling from defence by Wood, Ford and Cowhurst.

Pics pick up first win in 10 games

Halesowen Town 1 Rushall Olympic 2 RUSHALL recorded their first win in 10 games with just local pride at stake in the final game of the season.

The visitors broke up field from Danny Bragoli's free-kick to snatch a 15th minute lead when lively Stan Mugisha slotted past goalkeeper Dan Platt.

Halesowen's Andre Johnson punished the Pics profligacy by levelling in the final minute of the first half with a fine finish past goalkeeper Jose Veiga to claim Halesowen's first goal in six outings.

Early in the second period substitute Marcus Jackson struck the home crossbar. But the Pics soon regained their lead with a 69th minute winner after Partodikomo laid the ball off for Bannister to drill home from the edge of the area and Rushall ran down the clock to complete their season on a high.



The ball ends up in the back of the Walsall net for Coventry's winning goal on Saturday

New name on cup as West Brom leads way

A NEW name will be engraved on the Williamson Trophy at the end of the 2017 season following second-round wins by West Bromwich Dartmouth, Ombersley, Berkswell and Walmer.

"I understand there are a few tired legs but come and tell me if you're tired. Let somebody else play. There are two games left and we have to respond."

"There are some little things I noticed on Saturday and there will be some stern words said. A few people will have to be accountable."

"I shouldn't be telling my substitutes to go and warm up after 15 minutes. I want to see if they look me in the eye and tell me why we failed to meet the standards we've set."

skittled for 67, in 28.2 overs at Sandwell Park. Liam Banks took 3-7 for Dartmouth then joined skipper Kadeer Ali (32) in an opening stand of 53 to put Shrewsbury out of their misery.

Banks finished unbeaten on 33.

The match between Worcestershire rivals Ombersley and Kidderminster turned into a

thriller with the home side winning by losing less wickets – despite 78 from Connor Smith.

Trophy holders Walsall bowed out to Berkswell, who will host Walmer in the last four. Luke Stynes took 3-34 as Berkswell recorded 265-7. In reply, Walsall never looked likely to threaten, all out for 188.

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Fostering has changed my life – it's the best thing I've ever done. I feel that I'm the lucky one. My three children are a gift and I really can't imagine our home without them – Mandy, foster carer.

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Foster Care Fortnight is Fostering Network's national campaign to promote awareness of fostering and to recruit more foster carers. Walsall Council is proud to support Foster Care Fortnight #FCF2017

Tom & Sharon:

My husband and I fostered for many years, caring for children of all ages, cultures and religions. In 2005 we were asked to have a Vietnamese boy, Thu, aged 10. Thu had been found living alone for a number of days. He arrived at our home with nothing more than the school uniform he had on.

Thu could only speak a little English when he came to us but he quickly picked up the language and settled into our home. Working hard at school, he soon caught up with other children of the same age. We decided to care for Thu long term. He was loved by all the family and, in turn, Thu loved them. There was never any mention of

his mother and no contact was made. We tried to make contact with another Vietnamese family to teach Thu about his culture but we were told that due to the North and South divide they could not help as it could put Thu in danger.

Thu always did as he was asked, never sulking or arguing if told no. In school, he had a few ups and downs, but worked hard to achieve the best. He was part of many teams including rugby and an adult's Australian football team. He also ran mini marathons in aid of cancer charities.

After joining the Navy Cadets at 12, Thu decided upon a career in the Navy as a chef, but was turned down when he applied at aged 17, due to his nationality. We were so disappointed for him, but he picked himself up

and began work as a trainee chef. However, in 2014, he had a phone call from the Navy inviting him back for an interview. We were delighted! In June 2015 the whole family cheered him on at his passing out parade.

Thu was 18 when his mom contacted him, via letter. He agreed to meet her and learned that he had a nine year old sister, which was a shock to him but something he was also pleased about! Together, we overcame any language or cultural obstacles over the years and Thu is now enjoying his dream career in the Navy. We are all so proud of what he has achieved and the many hurdles overcome to get there. It's been a pleasure to care for Thu and he is a pleasant, well rounded and affectionate person and a treasured member of our family.

"We all have giants..... but some giants are smaller than others."

Siblings Jack & Ellie are introduced to their new foster family.

Find out who their giants are by visiting

Facebook/ [fosteringinwalsall](#) or [www.fosteringinwalsall.co.uk](#)

Wednesday 6th May 2017, 3.00pm

#KeepThemTogether #FosterForYourLA



I've always received great support, especially when I had placement difficulties. 'The Skills to Foster' training is excellent - it really prepares you. - Mandy, foster carer.

Paula & Mark

My wife and I have been fostering for almost two years. We were recently involved in helping a little boy return to the care of his birth family

J came to us on a Friday evening, aged 13 months old, with bags of clothes, toys and medication. There were concerns about his physical development and speech delay. Despite this J settled with us and seemed content from the first night. As dad lived out of the area, our initial contact with J's birth family was with mom. J gained confidence in our home, quickly starting to walk, his vocabulary grew by the week and his asthma improved. His father had requested contact visits and made the long journey each week to see

J. Following careful assessments of both J's parents, the social workers involved decided that he would be safe and happy living with dad. It was impractical for dad to leave his family for a couple of weeks to be with us to observe J's waking, lunchtime and bedtime routines, so we agreed take J to where his dad lived and stay nearby in a cottage for a week to support the transition for everyone.

After the initial unfamiliarity of being in a new home environment with his dad and stepmom, J relaxed and started to play with his little brother. By the middle of the week J was enjoying periods of time with his family without us being there. On the final day we played with J at our cottage and effectively said our own goodbyes before taking him to his dad's house where he would now live. We stayed

in the area for a few days afterwards and although we exchanged phonecalls with dad and stepmom we were satisfied that J had settled and so returned home.

The professionals involved praised our commitment in supporting J's transition. We just had J's best interests at heart and we were pleased that we spent time with him at his new home, giving us the re-assurance that he was safe and happy. There can be a perception that children in foster care don't always get to return to their own family but we were proud that we could be a part of reuniting J with his dad and that the time we all invested helped to make the transition as smooth as possible. We wouldn't have changed a thing.

Liam, aged 13 – Member of a fostering family

Since my parents became foster carers I have been able to understand and appreciate what some children go through. I have so much empathy for them and I know that while they live with us they will be looked after very well.

I love to help my mom with the little ones and play with them, with their toys. I enjoy showing the older children how to use a computer, as I am a bit of a geek! I can usually make the little ones laugh and giggle and I love to read to them. I realise that the children look to me as a big brother, and I try to conduct myself in a way that reflects a role model for them.

The only downside of fostering, for me, is when the children move on or return to birth family. I really do find this upsetting and will openly cry. This makes me feel like we have had a loss in the family, because they are all treated as part of our family. My experience as a foster brother has made me realise that I would like to work within this field of either foster carer, social work or support work with children.

Fostering, for me, is a positive experience. I admire the children that we have looked after because I know if I was taken away from my family, I don't think I would cope. My mom is constantly amazed how quickly the children adapt into our family and always asks me to put myself in their

shoes for a day! I still enjoy my quality time with my mom and dad and extended family and they make sure that this happens regularly.

I would have loved a younger brother but unfortunately my parents were unable to give me that, but they gave me the experience of 37 foster brothers and sisters! I've had a permanent foster sister for almost 6 years. There's typical sibling rivalry, and we don't get on all of the time, but I'm always happy to help her with homework and at least I have someone that in future years I can turn to..... hopefully!!!

I've often thought about fostering but....

We hear this so often, but the truth is that lots of people are eligible to foster. If you have a spare bedroom at home, have time in your life to care for a child and want to make a positive difference to a young person's life, then we would like to hear from you! There are many myths about fostering and people often rule themselves out before finding out more, so we have explored some of the common myths below.

I'm single, I can't foster -

You can be single, living with a partner, married or from the LGBT community. It's helpful if you have a supportive network of family or friends around you too.

I can't work and foster -

It depends how many hours you work, how flexible your current employer is and on the ages and needs of the children you foster. We pay allowances to cover your household costs and an additional amount for each child you foster. Some employers, including Walsall Council, have a Family Friendly policy which may provide flexibility and support if you decide to become a foster carer.

I don't have children of my own -

You don't need to have your own children to be a good foster carer. Time spent caring for nieces, nephews or working or volunteering with children will be valuable experience too. In addition to ongoing support from your dedicated supervising social worker there is lots of training to develop your skills and knowledge.

I'm too old to foster -

There's no upper age limit for foster carers! As long as you are fit and able to care for a child then there is no official age where you are 'too old' to foster. We have excellent carers of all ages, including those in their sixties.

I don't own my home -

You can live in either rented or owned accommodation. If you are a tenant then your landlord just needs to confirm to us that they are happy for you to foster. It's important that each child you care for has their own bedroom, a space just for them.

I've got pets -

We understand that your pets are part of your family and we will include your cat or dog in our assessment, looking at their temperament and behaviour, to make sure that you are all ready to foster. Having pets can also be beneficial to the children in your care.

Join us during Foster Care Fortnight 2017

Walsall Council need more foster carers to look after local children. Are you ready to find out more about fostering for Walsall Council? Come and meet some of Walsall's fostering team and foster carers during our Foster Care Fortnight events below.

Monday 8th May
10.00am - 4.00pm
Saddlers Shopping Centre,
Walsall
WS1 1YS *

Tuesday 9th May
10.00am - 12.30pm
'Open House' coffee morning.
Walsall Foster Carer's
Association,
28 New Forest Road,
WS3 1TR *

Thursday 11th May
1.00pm - 3.30pm
Darlaston Library,
1 King Street,
Walsall,
WS10 8DE

Friday 12th May
12.00pm - 2.00pm
Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall,
WS1 1UZ

Saturday 13th May
9.00am - 11.00am
Walsall Arboretum
Visitor's Centre,
Walsall Arboretum,
WS4 2BU *

Monday 15th May
3.30pm - 6.00pm
Palfrey Children's Centre,
South Street,
Walsall,
WS1 4HE *

Tuesday 16th May
11.00am - 1.30pm
Manor Hospital,
Pleck Road,
Walsall,
WS2 9PS

Wednesday 17th May
4.30pm - 6.30pm
Essington Lodge,
106 Essington Road,
Willenhall,
WV12 5EX *

Thursday 18th May
4.00pm - 6.30pm
Pelsall Village Centre,
High Street,
Pelsall,
WS3 4LX *

Friday 19th May
10.00am - 12.30pm
Brownhills Library,
Park View Centre,
Chester Road North,
WS8 7JB

You can speak with Walsall foster carers at the events marked with a *

Call on 0800 923 3706

Website: www.fosteringinwalsall.co.uk

Email: fosteringinwalsall@walsall.gov.uk



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